

Daniel Tudor on why more of Korea's youth will be drawn to the countryside — a reversal of today's

THE FUTURE OF KOREA

urbanization-at-all costs. We also have an exclusive excerpt from his book "Korea: The Impossible Country"

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The future is 'cheonseureopda'

■ Like many Korea enthusiasts, I'm quite the fan of old photo sets from the early '60s – you know, the ones where hanbok-clad gentlemen drive oxen around Namdaemun, holding up the new city traffic. In fact, I'm a geek for that whole era. My jaw drops when I read that 1 pyeong of Apgujeong land could be had for 400 won back in 1963. And I smirk when I hear about the Sibal Taxi (not a double ㅅ but just a single ㅅ, I'm afraid), a rudimentary car from back then. The past is indeed a foreign country, as a better writer than I once noted.

And how different will today's Korea seem to the next generation? Given how quickly this place changes, it would be no doubt foolish to even try to predict. But apparently it is part of the foreign correspondent's job to develop a long-term perspective on a country: "Try and get a sense of where this place is headed in the next 20 years," one veteran advised me. "It doesn't matter if you're completely wrong. Nobody will remember by then anyway," he kindly added.

It would be tempting to imagine a super-futuristic Korea in which kids fly to and from TOEIC test centers by jet-pack, but in some ways I think this


country will be going back to the old school. In spite of outward displays of pride, South Koreans quite understandably spent most of the short history of their state trying to get away from anything that reminded them of the past. But the next generation will have a much greater interest in all that is "old" or traditional. And I think more and more will go back to the countryside.

Industrialization brought millions into to the big smoke, and stacked them up on top of each other in gigantic grey boxes. Suddenly, the village – the basis of society – was past it. It can be no coincidence that the word chonseureopda (촌스럽다, "country style") became conflated with all that is tacky and old-fashioned. But as the late 1950s-early 1960s baby boom generation retires, we will see a reversal of sorts.

Some will be driven out by the cost of Seoul, and some will go by choice. They won't be that old – Korean companies push workers out in their early fifties – so they'll need to keep working, starting businesses with their life savings, for instance.

Over the past 10 years, we have seen a reappraisal of the hanok (in both original and hybrid forms). This has mostly been confined to the

wealthy, but it is a trend that will spread. Particularly in the country, people will realize that it is not absolutely necessary to live in a 30-pyeong "unit" of a rectangular carbuncle. A newlywed friend of mine recently built a proper house on farmland just half an hour's drive from Seoul. It has a big garden, too, in which he once chanced upon some wild ginseng. The whole thing cost him 200 million won. Try getting a Lotte Castle "unit" with that.

Ex-urbanites such as my friend will bring a new sophistication to rural Korea. And changes in the labor market will, I believe, also lead to the rise of remote working and "perma-lancing," which can be done in or out of the city. Meanwhile the end of rapid growth in Korea will make Seoul less of a land of opportunity. The costs of living here will stay the same, but the benefits will diminish. 

Guest editorial by
Daniel Tudor

Guest editorial

Have something to say?
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HOT ON: WWW.GROOVEKOREA.COM

Community:

Becoming Bruce Lee

Bruce Lee was (and still is) the epitome of Asian male masculinity. His dominance in martial arts was only possible due to a severely uncompromising regimen. Lee thought martial artists of his time didn't emphasize physical conditioning enough and practiced all kinds of fitness himself. He could perform such feats as 50 one-armed chin ups and extending a 75-pound barbell from his chest to directly in front and holding it for several seconds.

Emil Lewis, on the other hand, is a fairly normal chap. He is not extreme or uncompromising, has an easy laugh, lacks affected airs, and has a mannered demeanor well past his 31 years. His day job has a low fitness requirement and he doesn't even work out at a gym, preferring body weight exercises at home and a nearby school.

But when he stared at his 5'8", 190-pound image in the mirror one day, he decided something wasn't right.

After an initial four month diet, losing 40 pounds in four months through dieting and exercise, Lewis began a project he calls Becoming Bruce Lee - with the goal to become as much like Bruce Lee as possible.

Six months later, Lewis was in the best shape of his life, down 45 pounds and accomplishing feats such as one-handed two-finger push ups and kicking his own shoulder.

Story by Dustin Cole

Read it online in January
or in print in February.

Community:

Taboos and tattoos

During the Joseon Dynasty (1392–1897), the permanent marking of one's skin with ink was used for one of two things: identifying current and former criminals or slave ownership. Having a tattoo during this time meant social isolation and a loss of any hope of having any respect or status in Korean society.

Daily life in the Joseon Dynasty was also heavily influenced by Confucianism, the sway of which dominates to this day. Confucianism views the body as a "sacred gift," so the idea of permanently marking or modifying it in any way represents a kind of contamination. This, of course, includes any personal art, no matter how meaningful it may be to you.

Then there's always the gangster connection.

Once so taboo that fitness centers banned anyone marked with a tattoo, modern society is now growing less intolerant of this art form.

A relatively new shop called Seoul Ink is at the forefront of this trend. It opened its doors in April 2011, but has built a strong reputation and large clientele.

On my first visit, Garrett Jacobs was in the middle of a session, having a zombie sleeve done by artist Kil Jun. "Seoul Ink is definitely one of my favorite tattoo studios I have ever had work done at by far," Jacobs said.

Story by Tey-Marie Astudillo

Read it online in January
or in print in February.

Insight:

Start your own business

Go on, admit it — at some point you've fantasized about starting up a business and getting out of the rat race. Doing that is challenging enough in your home country, but doing it overseas presents another host of challenges.

Entrepreneurship goes hand-in-hand with risk, determination, creativity, business savvy and people skills. Like entrepreneurs anywhere, having all the skills essential to running a business isn't necessary.

Eddy Park, the man behind iguidekorea.com, the first foreign-owned climbing guide service in Korea, put it most succinctly: "I kinda just get the job done. When I need something I go and get it. When I come across a problem, I figure out a way to solve it. When I want to do something, I try to get it done. Sometimes, the results aren't pretty the first time around, but I'm great at learning from my mistakes. And in the end, I give my customers the best service that comes from learning from my past."

After combing through 10,000 words of notes and over a dozen interviews, we've put together the 10 essentials to creating your own gig. Atop the list is to discover an opportunity: You are literally surrounded by opportunities. A surprising number of problems people have and the products or solutions to fix them simply did not exist even 10 years ago.

Story by Chris Backe

Read it online in January
or in print in February.



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Exclusive excerpt from "Korea: The Impossible Country"

Groove exclusive: "More Than Just 'K Pop'" — a chapter on Korean popular music from Daniel Tudor's "Korea: The Impossible Country."



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5 flights for under \$500

A few years ago it would have been tough to get a round trip flight from Korea for under \$500, but now there are a number of discount carriers that fly anywhere, from Kota Kinabalu to Cebu and Phuket.



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Where do you start with a country that rose from the ashes of the Korean War to become not only one of the 15 richest countries in the world, but a model for democracy in Asia? Daniel Tudor, foreign correspondent for the London-based Economist magazine, explains that and more in his new book, "Korea: The Impossible Country."

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Music makes the event

Held every three months, Clash features music by Korean and expat hip-hop and indie rock bands. Clash 4.0 is set for Jan. 26 at Club Freebird in Hongdae.



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Capturing Korea: Daejeon

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Breaking barriers to find a voice

What began as a mission for an electric guitar ended as a trio pushing the limits of musical preconceptions. This is the story of the pioneering Gangneung-based band Language of Shapes.

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Connecting Communities

Introducing some of the editors, writers and photographers behind January's issue.



Daniel Tudor
U.K.

Daniel Tudor is The Economist's Korea correspondent. He also writes for a number of other publications, including a regular column in the JoongAng Sunday. Recently he released his first book, "Korea: The Impossible Country." Daniel is from Stalybridge, a small town near Manchester, England (since everyone asks, United, not City). In his spare time he enjoys playing guitar and bass. He contributed our guest editorial this month.

John Burton
U.S.

John Burton has spent more than 20 years as a journalist in Asia – most of it as a correspondent and bureau chief for the Financial Times in Singapore, Malaysia and Korea. Since returning in 2009, he has worked as an editor at the Korea JoongAng Daily and Arirang and is now senior consultant with Insight Communications. John interviewed author Daniel Tudor and reviewed "Korea: The Impossible Country" in this month's issue of Groove Korea.



Jen Lee
U.S.

Jen is a Korean-American who resides in the city of Gwangju. She is currently working at an animation company while also doing work as a freelance artist whenever she can. Jen hopes to someday change the world with her silly drawings. When she's not working or trying to improve her skills, she can be found sleeping, watching cartoons or playing video games. Her current addiction is milk tea. Jen contributes the monthly comic strip "Dear Korea."



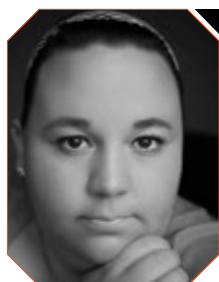
Ben Landau
Canada

Ben is a freelance culture writer from Toronto. His interests include educational podcasts, basketball and the retroactive glorification of Steven Seagal films. When not writing for Groove Korea, you can find him wandering Hongdae in lensless glasses. Ben contributed "Hello, my name is Annyong" and "Bucking the tony taco trend" to this month's Groove Korea. Follow his blog at soimovedtojapan.tumblr.com.



Sabrina Hill
Canada

Sabrina is a photographer on film sets for major and indie films. A native of Toronto, she has been in Korea for just over seven years. She has a degree in political science from Brock University and runs the Center for Strategy and Peace in Korea, a Seoul-based nongovernmental organization. Ask her a question about North Korea and be prepared for a long-winded treatise. This month, she contributed "A refugee's tale of hope and action."



On the cover: Book it

Admit it, you were fantasizing about your next vacation. Let us help. Our Destinations section has feature stories on Korea, India, Malaysia and 12 flights for under \$500, plus some travel tips from a globe-trotting pro.

See the full story on Page 52



Cover photo by Dirk Schlottmann / Design by Daniel Sanchez

Our past three issues:



December 2012

Korean pilgrimage diaries, Christmas dinner in Korea, Breathtaking destinations



November 2012

Japan's shame, Pyongyang International Film Festival, Chasing autumn, Veg 101



October 2012

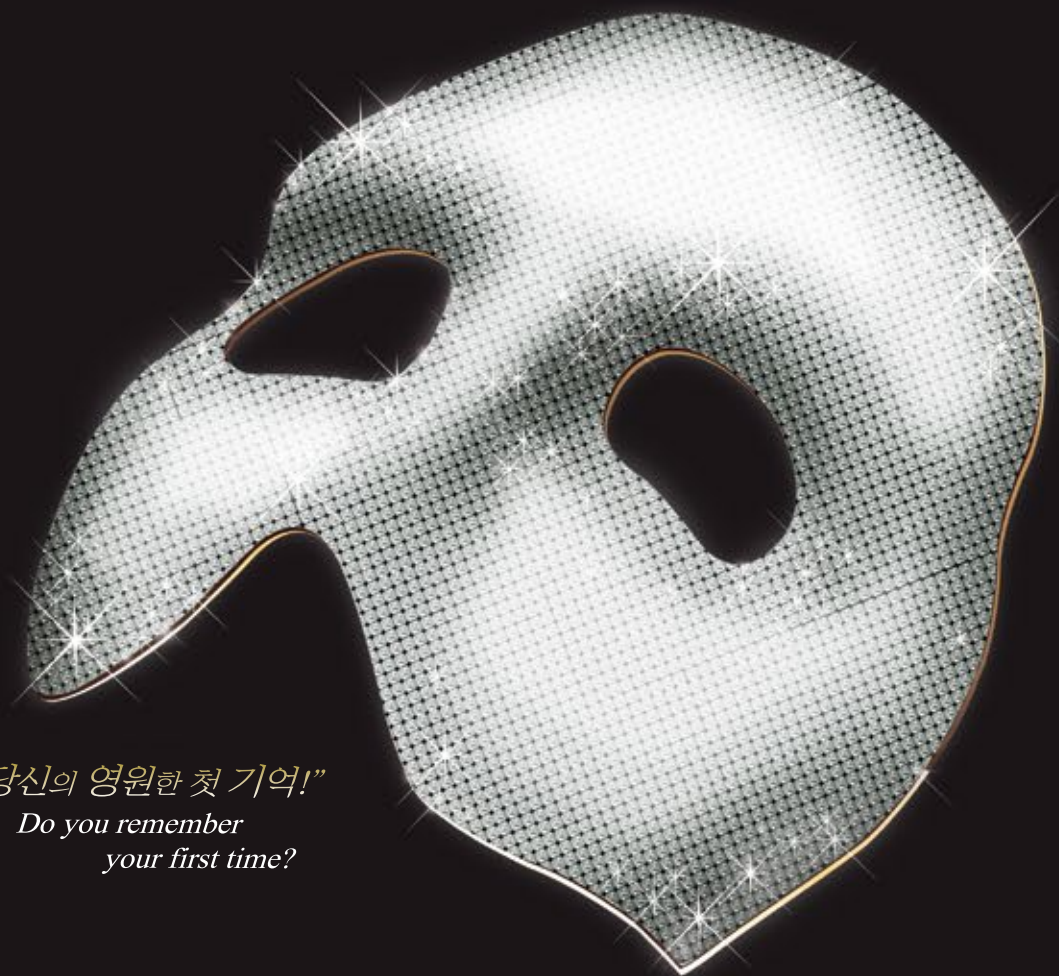
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Must Reads

The 'impossible' rise of Korea

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Groove Korea sat down with Daniel Tudor to discuss the book that everyone is talking about — "Korea: The Impossible Country." Tudor suggests that South Korea is entering a new paradigm, one that is increasingly liberal and cosmopolitan. He believes that the hierarchical and parochial nature of society is on the decline. ▼



Hello, my name is Annyong

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Justin Lee is a man of many titles. Most know him as Annyong, the adopted Korean son of Lucille and George Sr. from Fox's beloved ex-sitcom "Arrested Development." Groove Korea talks to Lee about his new web series, his Korean roots, his passion for mixed martial arts and working on the set of "Arrested Development." ▼



12 flights for under \$500

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Instead of fantasizing about going somewhere warm this winter, book some time off and just do it. Not that long ago, you would have had to drop a million won to get to and from Korea, but now there are a number of discount carriers that fly anywhere from Kota Kinabalu, Macau and Cebu to Phuket — for relatively cheap. ▼



Lessons learned from traveling the world

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After 50 days on the road, intrepid traveler Elizabeth Groeschen fills us in on the lessons she's learned on her trip around the world. Lesson No. 1: Forget everything you've read about having a sturdy, solid backpack (or travel bag) — what you need is something comfortable. ▼



Stretch your potential

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Yoga is about much more than simply stretching. Yoga, as a practice, trains the mind and body to relax muscles at the right times, rather than making them hold constant tension. Start the year right and commit to getting in shape — mentally and physically. Groove Korea suggests four yoga studios. ▼



Music makes the event

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A small idea turned into a big success when Emma Kalka teamed up with Hannah Kamau in the hopes of melding music and charity to raise awareness about social issues. Clash 4.0 takes place on Jan. 26 at Club Freebird in Hongdae and features some of the best indie rock bands that Korea has to offer. ▼



Groove's Inbox

Saying 'goodbye' to South Korea

They say you can never go home again. Korea was my home for five years. It was here that I learned how to sing and play guitar, which is now my profession. It was here that I grew up and stopped looking for the approval of my parents. I assumed full responsibility for my life. I even started doing stand-up comedy, my new passion. The list of what I did and what I learned goes on and on. I came back three months ago to visit and now it is time to leave again.

My time was 2005-2009. I came to Korea to supposedly teach English and save a bunch of money. I didn't save a dime and I only lasted as a teacher for two years. I remember the shock of realizing that I wasn't a teacher. "You're a musician," a friend told me. "How do you know?" I said. "Well, it's not rocket science, chief," he replied. I initially thought that teaching would be a vacation, that it would be easy. It wasn't. Now I have tremendous respect for teachers. It's hard, thankless work. I tried, but I wasn't cut out for it.

When the money ran out and the teaching gigs became unreachable, I walked the streets as a homeless person for about a year. During that time I read books and thought about my life. I thought about money and the grind and what I really wanted to do. I decided that I was an artist and that I would dedicate my life to performing and creating. I got addicted to the work of Joseph Campbell, who told me to follow my bliss and that if I did, doors would open for me.

He was right. Through my wanderings I met people who gave me shelter and company. I lost a lot of friends during my homeless time, but I gained many others. Friends come and go; this is something that I learned in Korea. People asked me, "Why didn't you just go home?" It was hard to explain that I didn't really have a home to go to and I certainly didn't have the money to leave. I just stayed here illegally for two years. When you're homeless, your priorities become very basic. As a teacher my priorities were looking cool, trying to get a girlfriend and having fun. As a homeless person my priorities were staying warm, fed and finding shelter. I was mostly successful. I only had to sleep outside a few times.

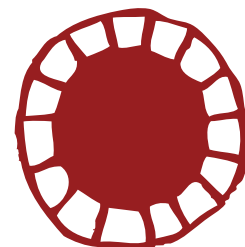
I later came to find out that my experience in Korea was a lot like Henry Miller's time in Paris back in the 1930s. He was penniless and had not a care in the world. He was happy to simply be an artist. I was happy to simply not be a slave to a job.

These last three months I've done virtually nothing during the day except go to coffee shops and read and write. People hear that and they think it's very glamorous. "I envy you," they say. You know what's funny though? Even when I was homeless, people told me the same thing. You know what people envy? It's not money. It's freedom. And I remember envying artists, too. When I was a slave to the grind I thought how sweet it would be to have time to just do what I wanted to do instead of what I had to do. My father used to tell me, "Son, you do what you have to do so that you can do what you want to do." Of course, he never got around to doing what he wanted to do. I rebelled against him.

Now I play music and do comedy at open mics. I sing, play guitar and try to make people laugh. This is my life. I do it for free here. I intend to make money doing it in America. Korea was the vessel that took me from adolescence and dependency to adulthood and independence. You can do things here that are not so easy to do back home. You can write for magazines, act on television, do voice acting, paint, sing, do photography. You can do stand-up, plan events, DJ, write music, write books. I guess you could do these things back home, too, but there's something spiritually liberating about Korea. It's a good country to incubate your dreams and unleash your creativity.

I could have done it anywhere I guess, but I chose to do it here. That being said, I can't stay. My time in Korea is done. I learned what I needed to learn and met who I needed to meet. This country gave me so much ammunition to fight with in this war called life. I hope you read this and pick up your paint brushes again, or take out your pen and write that poem you've been thinking about. I'd stay to help you, but there comes a time when we all must say goodbye, and now it's my turn.

— Ryan Gerard, Seoul



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KOREA JOONGANG DAILY

In association with *International Herald Tribune*

NATIONAL NEWS with GROOVE

January 2013 / www.koreajoongangdaily.com

FEWER BROTHELS, MORE PROSTITUTION

After the sex trade law went into effect on Sept. 23, 2004, the number of old-style red-light districts in Korea decreased, but prostitution has taken on new forms and began popping up in areas where people live and send their children to school.

Now prostitutes practice their trade in room salons, massage parlors and officetels, dual purpose buildings used for both commercial and residential purposes. These new setups allow pimps to more discreetly arrange sex for money.

A team of JoongAng Ilbo reporters investigated how these prostitution places are operating in the country's major cities, including Seoul, Busan, Gwangju and Ulsan, in November.

Many regions including Yeongdeungpo, Hawolgok-dong, northern Seoul, Cheonho-dong, eastern Seoul, and Cheongyangni and Yongsan District, central Seoul have long carried reputations as red-light areas, but Yongsan is the only place where those brothels have completely disappeared.

In Yongsan District, the area where the ladies used to stand in front of the windows is now a construction site. Before the law, there were more women who stood before plate glass windows backlit with red or pink lamps, done up in makeup and wearing high heels, waiting for customers. Entire city blocks would glow with these establishments. Some still remain, but they're becoming outdated.

The police's strong crackdown on prostitution contributed to lowering the number of brothels but not the amount of prostitution, and some brothels are coming back.

"We don't have enough manpower," a police officer of the Yeongdeungpo Police Precinct said. "The number has decreased, but there are many survivors."

"The (sex) industry isn't good like it was in the past," a prostitute in Paju, Gyeonggi, told the JoongAng

Ilbo.

According to a sex trade study conducted by Seoul National University in 2010, the number of prostitutes in brothels is 3,917, up by 273 from 3,644 in 2007. "Brothels are not the first option for Koreans any more as they prefer to go to massage parlors, room salons or officetels," a worker at a brothel said. "But many migrant workers have become loyal customers."

On the same day on the street of Sangmu District, Gwangju, black luxury sedans delivered a steady stream of women to room salons. For every car, at least two or three women in heavy makeup walked into a room salon.

Within a 1-kilometer (0.6-mile) radius in the district, about 200 places, including massage shops and room salons, could be found, and about 90 percent of them told reporters that they could arrange sex for money. The price for one person for sex ranged from 150,000 won to 600,000 won.

According to the 2010 sex trade study, the number of red-light districts decreased to 25 from 31 in 2008. It added that the country's sex industry generates 8.7 trillion won and about 7 percent, or 576.5 billion, of that total comes from brothels. The study, however, said the number of room salons and massage parlors that offer prostitution has gradually increased in the last few years— from 195 in 2009 to 228 last year in Sangmu District.

The JoongAng Ilbo also explored other places that have become known for prostitution: Yeoksam-dong, Seoul; Yeonsan-dong, Busan; and Samsan-dong, Ulsan — considered "new towns" for prostitution.

The Ministry of Gender Equality and Family said the number of hostess bars and room salons went up to 31,623 in 2010 from 28,757 in 2007 and the number of massage parlors increased from 3,360 in 2007

to 5,271 in 2010.

The real problem of these emerging areas is their locations. Many are located close to residential or school areas. The Sangmu sex district is located across the street from a large apartment complex and about 190 meters (620 feet) from an elementary school. In Busan and Ulsan, a large apartment complex was located close to places offering sex, and girls' middle and high schools were found near prostitution places in Yeoksam-dong, southern Seoul.

Other than room salons and massage parlors, officetels, where pimps arrange sex via the internet or mobile messengers, are also a popular option. Once a pimp receives a call from a customer, he or she provides the room number of an apartment where a prostitute waits. The JoongAng Ilbo found 71 officetels that offer prostitution near Yeoksam, Gangnam, Seolleung, Hongdae and Sinnonhyeon stations.

When the JoongAng Ilbo called an officetel service in Mapo District, western Seoul, the pimp immediately gave the exact location information and price for prostitution. There was a private child care center on the second floor of the building.

The advancement of internet and smartphones has also had a noticeable impact on the sex trade. In order to avoid the police, many pimps create internet cafes to arrange sexual services. They include photos of prostitutes, their body sizes, as well as types of available services. When the JoongAng Ilbo made inquiries through popular mobile messengers such as KakaoTalk and Scout, a woman who identified herself as a manager of an officetel responded in 20 minutes that she could arrange sex immediately.

"The government misjudged that it could root out prostitution only by revising the sex trade law," said Prof. Lee Wung-hyeok of the Public Administration Department of Korean National Police University.

COURT UPHOLDS 20-YEAR JAIL SENTENCE FOR MURDERER

A 32-year-old doctor accused of killing his pregnant wife was sentenced to 20 years in a retrial held yesterday. The Seoul High Court upheld the previous jail sentence. The case was transferred to the Supreme Court in June, but the court sent it back to the high court, stating the court should clarify the grounds that led them to give the doctor surnamed Baek a 20-year prison term. In January last year, the doctor, a fourth-year resident at Severance Hospital in Seoul, reported to police that he

had discovered his wife dead in a bathtub in their home in Mapo District, western Seoul. However, he was charged in March for murder after an autopsy concluded that his 29-year-old wife, who was nine-months-pregnant at the time, was strangled to death by Baek and found his DNA under her blood-stained fingernails. She also had bruises on her face and wrist. In previous trials, the courts said that Baek killed his wife after she complained about him excessively playing computer games.

ITAEWON MURDER SUSPECT FILES APPEAL

Arthur Patterson, a 33-year-old prime suspect for the 1997 killing of a Korean college student in an Itaewon restaurant, appealed to a U.S. court against extradition to Seoul to stand trial on charges of murder.

The Ministry of Justice said yesterday the alleged murderer petitioned a California Federal Court for Habeas Corpus relief on Nov. 20, a step taken by Patterson to avoid extradition to Korea.

The legal team for the alleged killer claims Patterson

was already acquitted by the court in Seoul for the murder and the Itaewon case is already settled, thus extraditing him to Korea on charges of murder is in violation of the principle of not reopening a settled case.

They also reportedly argued the statute of limitations for the case already expired this April, 15 years after the murder case. His defense argues the case was closed in 1999.

It could take a number of years for the prime

suspect to be sent to stand trial as Patterson could appeal to a federal appeals court even if a federal court in California rejects his petition.

Patterson, who was 18 at a time of the murder, is accused of fatally stabbing a 23-year-old college student named Cho Jung-pil, on April 3, 1997, in a bathroom of a Burger King in Itaewon, which is now the location of a coffee shop on the second floor and an Olive Young on the first floor.

WOMAN STABS ELDERLY STRANGER

A 23-year-old college graduate stabbed a total stranger waiting for an elevator in an office building in Ulsan, a reminder of a string of violent crimes earlier this year.

The Ulsan Nambu Police Precinct said yesterday they were questioning the suspect, a woman surnamed Choi, for allegedly stabbing a 62-year old woman three times in her chest and back at around 6:30 p.m. Wednesday in front of an elevator on the third floor of a commercial building in Nam District, Ulsan.

Choi's mother works as a cashier at a beauty equipment shop on that floor. The suspect was visiting her mother at the shop Wednesday and without warning attacked the victim, who was surnamed Han, with a 13-centimeter (5-inch) fruit knife.

The two are not believed to have known each other.

Han was pronounced dead in a hospital from loss of blood. Choi was arrested at the scene after waiting for the police to arrive with no facial expression, witnesses said.

According to police, Choi studied craft design at an undisclosed school in Busan and did not have a regular job after graduating this year. She worked part time at a cosmetic shop in a department store before quitting early last month.



‘WINTER SONATA’ CELEBRATES DECADE

To mark its 10th anniversary, the drama “Winter Sonata” will hold a fan meet next year in Japan. The showcase will take place Feb. 8 at Tokyo International Forum Hall, according to the show's website. More than 5,000 fans will be treated to a meet-and-greet event over two sessions.

Program director Yoon Suk-ho, as well as actors Jung Dong-hwan, Song Ok-sook, Ryu Seung-soo and the mother of the late actor Park Yong-ha will take part. Those who worked on the theme song and

the soundtrack will also participate in the fan meet.

It is not known whether leads Bae Yong-joon and Choi Ji-woo will make an appearance.

Since 2002, the drama featuring Bae and Choi has come to represent K-dramas worldwide. It was a big hit in Japan, and Japanese tourists still make the pilgrimage to Korea's Nami Island, where it was shot.

In September, the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism said the KBS program was among those chosen to help foreigners learn Korean.

KOREAN SAILORS BUSTED WITH HUGE METH SHIPMENT

Two Korean sailors who attempted to smuggle 23 kilograms (50.7 pounds) of drugs were caught by the Public Security Bureau in China. According to the government sources, two sailors, identified as surname Kim, 70, and Jeong, 64, were arrested by Chinese officers at Nantong Port in Shanghai on Oct. 31.

The government said it is the single largest drug smuggling case ever attempted by Koreans overseas.

The government said the suspects had 23 kilos of methamphetamine thought to be manufactured in Shenzhen, China. They were trying to smuggle the drug into Japan when they were caught.

“About 770,000 people could get high with that much meth,” a Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade spokesman told the JoongAng Ilbo.

“The drugs are worth about 77 billion won (\$71.1 million). Considering their ages, we judge that the two suspects are veteran drug smugglers.”

Drug users take an average of 30 milligrams of

methamphetamine in one dose and its market price in the region is about 100,000 won per dose.

Drug smuggling is punishable by death in China, regardless of nationality, if found to be smuggling more than 1 kilogram of methamphetamine.

The Chinese government has been taking stronger action against these “triangle” type drug operations — manufactured in China, distributed through Korea and illegally consumed in Japan.

The government said three Koreans have been sentenced to death by Chinese courts for drug smuggling. In August, a court in Yanbian sentenced a 51-year-old Korean man to death who was caught traveling from Changchun to Shenyang with 10.3 kilos of methamphetamine in July 2009.

If the death sentence is confirmed in the last trial, the execution will take place one year later. A Korean man surnamed Shin was executed in 2001.

“We can't guarantee that we can save their lives because the quantity of drugs is so high,” a spokesman

of the Foreign Affairs Ministry said. “But we will take our best shot at bringing them home.”

It added that a total of 346 Koreans are currently jailed in China and 95, or 27.4 percent, of the prisoners are there on charges related to dealing drugs.

The government, however, expected that they can trace the supply sources of ephedrine, one of the key ingredients used in manufacturing methamphetamine.

The government suspects that these drug dealers are possibly related to the North Korean government as they are generating foreign income by producing and selling ephedrine.

“The North began manufacturing methamphetamine in 1996,” said Gwak Byeong-tae, an official from the Korea Food and Drug Administration. “Two North Korean vessels disguised as a fishing boat delivering 100 kilos of methamphetamine to Japanese yakuza were caught by Japanese police at Tottori in April, 1994.”

EVENTS

January 1st - January 30th

1 - Tuesday

Food: 2 For 1 fish & chips @ Wolfhound (Tuesdays); wolfhoundpub.com

Ski/hot spring tour: 3 days @ Youngpyeong; includes bus, gear, spa, room; \$330 weekdays & \$370 weekends; wowcoreatour.com

Happy hour: 1 free beer with burger or fish & chips @ Big Rock in Gangnam; Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, bigrockbeer.co.kr

2 - Wednesday

Social: Quiz night @ Craftworks in Noksapyeong (Wednesdays); craftwork-staphouse.com

Social: Standup comedy (Wednesdays) @ Tony's in Itaewon; tonsysitaewon.com

Tour: Jeju island, Hamdeok Beach with WOW Tour; 2 nights, 3 days; wowcoreatour.com

3 - Thursday

Box office: Life of Pi opens nationwide; cineinkorea.com

Social: Open mic @ Orange Tree in HBC (Thursdays); (02) 749-8202

Box office: Margin Call opens nationwide; cineinkorea.com

4 - Friday

Skating: Ice rink @ Seoul Plaza is open throughout the winter to public; 10am-10pm; 1,000 won/hour

Festival: Jaraseom Singing Winter Festival @ Gyeonggi-do; Jan. 4-27; jarasum.net

Concert: Wasted Johnny's, Exit, Flying Chicken @ Soundholicity in Hongdae; 11 pm; cafe.daum.net/SoundHolic

5 - Saturday

Volunteer: Help disabled people at the Angel House in Goyang; meet at 1:30 p.m. at Yeonsinnae station, Exit 3

Festival: Hwachon Sancheoneo Ice Festival @ Hwacheon-gun, Gangwon-do; Jan. 5-27; narafestival.com

6 - Sunday

Food: Sunday Buffet Brunch @ Big Rock in Gangnam; 11,000 won; bigrockbeer.co.kr

Self-help: AA meeting @ the International Lutheran Church; 5 p.m.; search Facebook for International Lutheran Church Seoul

7 - Monday

Food: Wing night @ Craftworks in Noksapyeong (Mondays); craftwork-staphouse.com

Social: Open mic @ Tony's in Itaewon (Mondays); tonsysitaewon.com



Read the article on page #.

8 - Tuesday

Musical: Promise opens @ The National Theater of Korea; Jan. 8- Jan. 20; ticket.interpark.com/Global/

Food: Pasta night @ Craftworks in Noksapyeong (Tuesdays); craftwork-staphouse.com

Beer: All-you-can-drink beer @ Ssada! Maeck Ju in Hongdae; 8,000 won (every day); (02) 3141-7011

Beer: 15,000 won all-you-can-drink @ Beer Garden. Renaissance Hotel; 6-9 pm (every day); (02) 2222-8630

9 - Wednesday

Food: Cheese steak sandwich night @ Hollywood Grill in Itaewon; (02) 749-1659

Social: Trivia night @ Beer O'Clock in Sechon; beeroclock.ca

15 - Tuesday

Lecture: 19th century through eyes of ambassador's wife; by Robert Neff @ Somerset Palace; raskb.com

Network: Join Seoul International Women's Association for skating @ Grand Hyatt Hotel, Seoul; 3 pm; siwapage.com

10 - Thursday

Concert: Lymbyc Systym @ Urban in Daegu; 10 pm; supercolorsuper.com

Box office: Cloud Atlas opens nationwide; cineinkorea.com

16 Wednesday

Happy hour: Foreigners' Night @ Big Rock in Gangnam; 1 free cocktail; bigrockbeer.co.kr

Happy Hour: 3,000 won off JD, Finlanda vodka @ DOJO in Itaewon

11 - Friday

Happy Hour: 2,000 won off beer/wine @ Craftworks in Noksapyeong; 4-6 pm; craftwork-staphouse.com

Concert: Lymbyc Systym @ Almost Famous in Busan; 10 pm; supercolorsuper.com

17 - Thursday

Social: Quiz night @ 3 Alley Pub in Itaewon; win beer; 3alleypub.com

Network: U.S. Women's Club of Korea invites all the ladies to Seoul Sisters' Night in assoc. w/ ANZA, BASS, CWC, and SIWA. Food, booze, music @ Renaissance Hotel

12 - Saturday

Concert: 50 Cent @ Olympic Park Gymnasium; 8 pm

Concert: Lymbyc Systym @ Badabie in Hongdae; 8 pm; supercolorsuper.com

13 - Sunday

Musical: The Phantom of the Opera @ Blue Square ; Jlast performance; ticket.interpark.com/Global/

Concert: 50 Cent @ BEXCO in Busan; 7 pm; bexco.co.kr

14 - Monday

Beer: Beer buffet @ 200 Bran Hauns; 9,900 won; Mon, Thurs, Sun at 5 pm; (02) 3481-9062

Exhibit: Tim Burton exhibition @ Seoul Museum of Art; through April 14



Read the article on page #.

For suggestions or comments,
email calendar@groovekorea.com

*All the events published in this calendar are subject to unforeseen changes by the promoters. Groove Korea does not take responsibility for any misunderstandings or third party damage.

18 - Friday

Beer: 15,000 won all-you-can-drink beer @ Beer Garden, Renaissance Hotel, Gangnam (every day, 6-9 p.m.); (02) 2222- 8630

Ski tour: 2 days @ Youngpyeong Ski Resort; includes bus, gear, room, ginseng center; \$290 weekday/320 weekend; wowcoreatour.com

Beer: All-you-can-drink beer @ Pho Mons in Gangnam; 4,900 won for 2 hours (every day); (02) 514-0513

19 - Saturday

Festival: Inje Icefish Festival @ Inje-gun, Gangwon-do; Jan. 19-27; injefestival.co.kr

Concert: Apollo 18, Gwamegi @ Prism i Hongdae; 6:30

Tour: Experiencing Korean spirituality through Buddha; with Royal Asiatic Society; 1-6 pm; raskb.com

20 - Sunday

Musical: Grease @ Gangdong Arts Center; last performance; ticket.interpark.com/Global/

Musical: My Love by My Side @ Kepco Art Center; last performance; ticket.interpark.com/Global/

Tour: Gwangneung & Sanjeong Lake; with Royal Asiatic Society; 8:30am to 7:30pm; raskb.com

21 - Monday

Musical: Rock of Ages @ Olympic Park, Woori Art Hall; runs through Feb. 3; Rebecca, The Musical

Ski tour: 1 day @ Yangji or Jisan Resort; 8 am-6 pm; \$75; includes transportation, gear; wowcorea-tour.com

22 - Tuesday

Two Differing Aesthetic Aspects of Korean Traditional Music; by Sheen Dae-Cheol; @ Somerset Palace; raskb.com

Food: Wing night @ 3 Alley Pub in Itaewon; 3alleypub.com

23 Wednesday

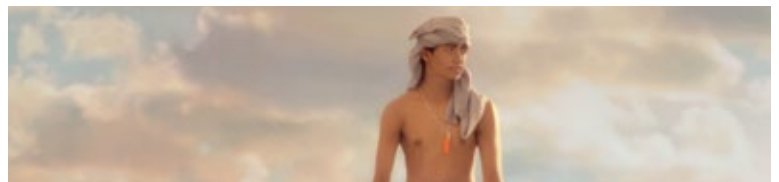
Concert: Beach House @ Interpark Artcenter Art Hall; 7 pm; ticket.interpark.com/Global

Network: Join Seoul International Women's Association's "enrichment classes @ Renaissance Hotel; 10am; siwapage.com

24 - Thursday

Happy hour: 1+1 Big Rock beer @ Big Rock in Gangnam; 5-8 pm; bigrockbeer.co.kr

Box office: Deadfall opens nationwide; cineinkorea.com



Read the article on page #.

25 - Friday

Festival: Tae-baek Mountain Snow Festival @ Taebaek-si, Gangwon-do; Jan. 25-Feb. 3; festival. taebaek.go.kr

Happy Hour: 2,000 won off beer/wine @ Craftworks in Noksapyeong; 4-6 pm; craftwork-staphouse.com

WIN STUFF: E-mail mattlamers@groovekorea.com for a chance to win 50,000. Draw will be held at month's end

Musical: Bibap @ Bibap Theatre; last performance; ticket.interpark.com/Global

26 - Saturday

Athletics: Special Olympics World Winter Games @ Pyeongchang-gun, Gangwon-do; Jan. 26-Feb. 6; 2013sopoc.org

Charity concert: Clash 4.0 @ Club Freebird in Hongdae; see article in music section

Music: ILLION-AIRE @ Interpark Artcenter Art Hall; 6 pm; ticket.interpark.com/Global

Info: Free shuttle bus Seoul-Busan every day except Monday; Seoul departure 8 a.m.; Busan departure 4 p.m.; visitkorea@chestours.co.kr

27 - Sunday

Hockey: Asia Hockey League: Seoul High 1 vs. Nippon Cranes @ Goyang; 7 pm; www.alhockey.com

Tour: Sujong-sa, Hongyu-neung and Donggu-neung Tour; with Royal Asiatic Society; 9am-6 pm; raskb.com

Food: Sunday Roast @ Craftworks in Noksapyeong; craftwork-staphouse.com

Musical: Catch Me If You Can @ Seongnam Arts Center; through Feb. 9; ticket.interpark.com/Global

28 - Monday

Happy hour: 1 free beer with burger or fish & chips @ Big Rock in Gangnam; Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, bigrockbeer.co.kr

Food: Wing night @ Craftworks in Noksapyeong (Mondays)

Info: Free shuttle bus Seoul-Jeonju every day except Monday; Seoul departure 8 a.m.; Jeonju Departure 5 p.m.; visitkorea@chestours.co.kr

Learn about Korea's cuisine with O'ngo culinary tour of Seoul; ongofood.com

29 - Tuesday

Ski tour: Join Seoul International Women's Association's @ Elysian Ski Resort; 720 a.m.; siwapage.com



Read the article on page #.

30 Wednesday

Hockey: Asia Hockey League: Anyang Halla vs. Nippon Cranes @ Anyang; 7 pm; www.alhockey.com

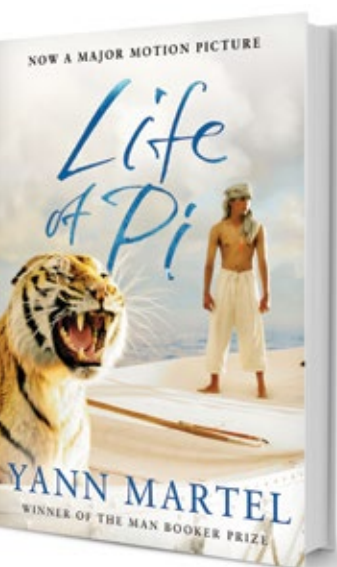
ITAEWON FINDS



1

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2

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10

9

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PIZZERIA D' BUZZA

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Itaewon



11

NIKE FREE TRAIL
NIKE TOWN

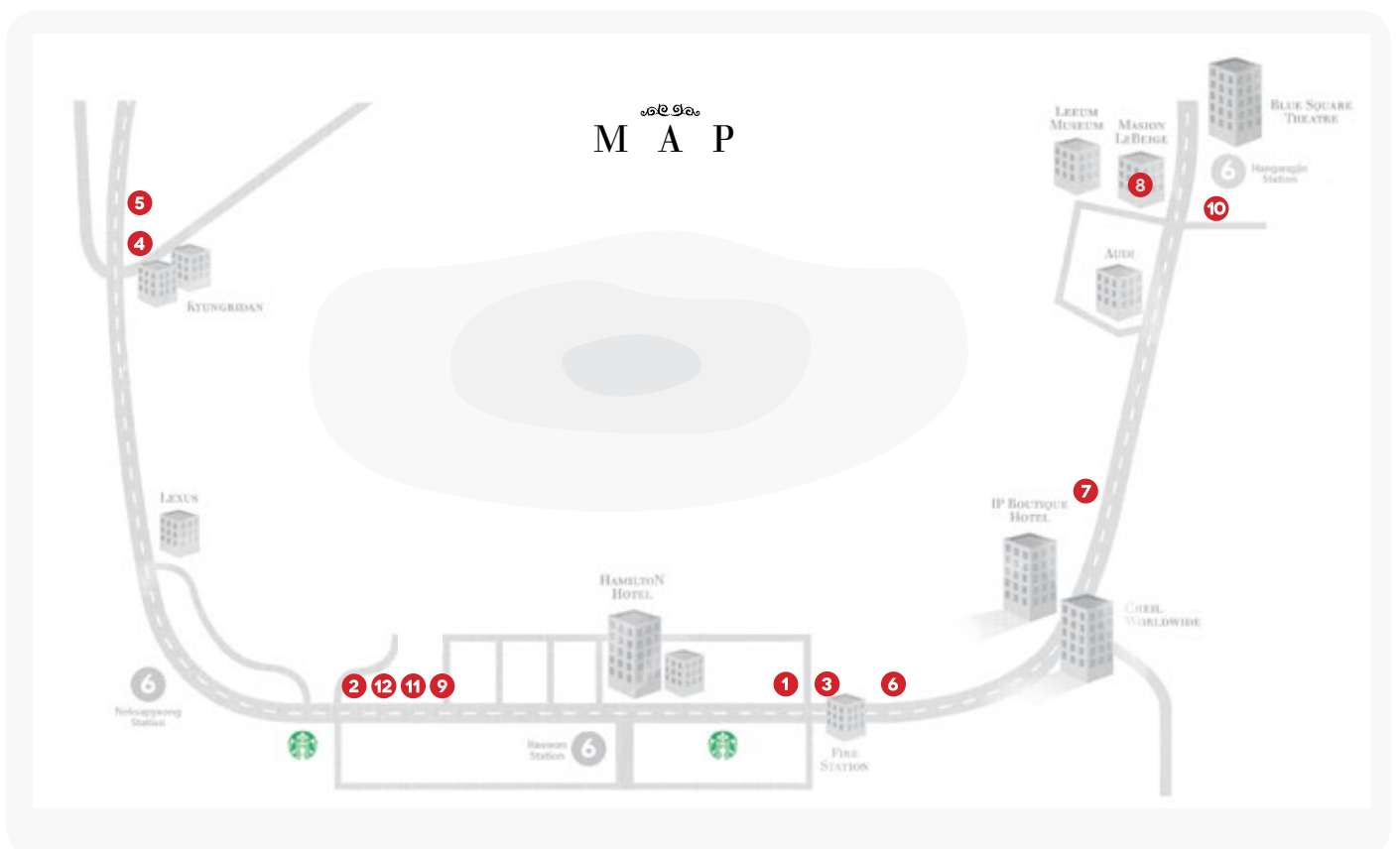
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12

GAENG KHIEW WHAN GAI
(GREEN CHICKEN CURRY)

WANG THAI

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4

2

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MOGOOL

Garosugil store
02. 3445. 6264



3

STRAWBERRY X-TREME SMOOTHIE
SMOOTHIE KING

Garosugil store
02. 515. 3394



5

WONDER BOOST
WONDERBRA

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EDGE ZEBRA CITY BAG
LAPALLETTE

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02-544-9324

6



7

CARD EXPO COSMO GALLERY

Cat with fish on it's mind
everyday card by ART PRESS
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8

MOISTURIZING BOMB BELIF

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flagship store
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10

MID-CALF BOOT WITH BUCKLE MASSIMO DUTTI

Leather boots
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9

HENRY'S RETRO SATCHEL BAG BAND OF PLAYERS

Garosugil store
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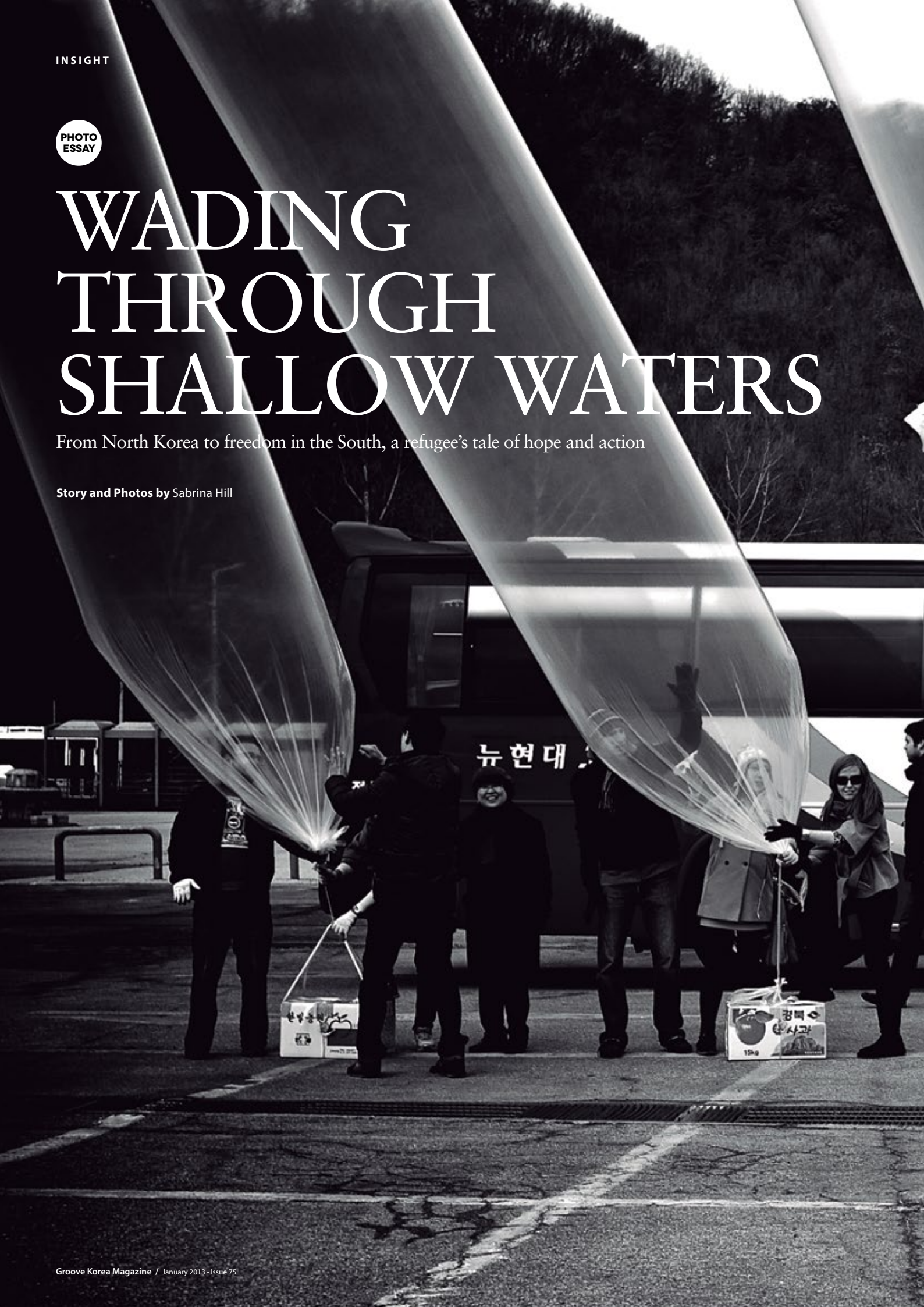
INSIGHT

PHOTO
ESSAY


WADING THROUGH SHALLOW WATERS

From North Korea to freedom in the South, a refugee's tale of hope and action

Story and Photos by Sabrina Hill







■ A child walks along a barren countryside road in North Korea — not more than a few dozen kilometers from the Demilitarized Zone. A forest on her left has long been pillaged for fuel and an empty rice field on the right is bone dry from years of economic and agricultural mismanagement. She stumbles across a crashed balloon and a box with socks scattered around it. She hurriedly gathers up as many as her small frame can carry. She makes it home and presents these rare gifts to her mom, who later trades them for grain — enough for a month's supply to feed the family.

That's how those in South Korea involved in launching the giant balloons over the border envision the end result of their efforts.


Lee Ju-seong, a striking man, slightly shorter than the average South Korean, steps off of a chartered bus in Paju. He heads towards a truck that had been tailing us to this empty parking lot just a stone's throw from razor wire and armed border guards. This man, unknown to most, walks with a purpose. He is later introduced to the group as a former North Korean now living in the South.

He is the very passionate organizer of today's mission to launch aid into North Korea with giant helium balloons.

Reserved, strong-willed and proud are just a few words to describe this man. Though slightly introverted, there is a certain affability about him. I suspect that is how he coaxed so many of us into joining him so early this morning.

The apologue of how Mr. Lee managed to escape to the South and why he does what he does with the balloon missions to the North are closely related. Upon fleeing from the cold, totalitarian grasp of the Kim Jong-il regime in 2005, Mr. Lee (as he is often addressed) settled in a small apartment in Seoul and from that day forward seemed entirely focused on one thing: His goal and mission in life had now become getting aid into the North, his former home, and now where many of his friends and family still live.





His methods, regarded as infamous and unconventional, seem to be effective. So much so that today his police escort is never out of eyesight for fear of assassination, something that he hadn't imagined when he escaped from his homeland seven years ago.

In 2005, upon discovering all was not right with what was being broadcast to him and his fellow citizens by the heretical incumbency of the Kim clan, and facing a potential long detention, torture, or a death sentence, Mr. Lee fled the only thing he knew. He left his wife, his two children, his mother and brothers. He waded through the cold, shallow waters of the Yalu River, the border between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the People's Republic of China. Over the next three months, he made his way to friendlier nations while avoiding Chinese authorities, known to repatriate defectors from North Korea without question.

After making it to South Korea, he spent another three months being debriefed by the National Intelligence Service. Afterwards, he was given a small amount of money and the chance to relearn everything he thought he knew. Mr. Lee was in for many surprises, among them having to relearn an entire history of his nation and world geography.

After establishing himself, Mr. Lee sent for his wife and two young children. Their escape was just as dangerous and uncertain as his, but they were strong, determined and their perseverance won out. However, he and his family's escape came at a cost that he had not expected. Friends and other family members who hadn't yet managed to escape had paid dearly for his actions. Leaving the secretive nation is considered a crime for the refugees and likely also for those friends and family members who knew about it or helped.



Today, Mr. Lee arranges the equipment to the ready. Slowly the 10 balloons fill with the hydrogen gas and the boxes are securely fastened.

As the volunteers line up the 10 balloons for one final photo, many of them reflect just how much this gift will help those that find this precious cargo in just a matter of hours. The consignment that is hidden within the 10 boxes now on their way to North Korea are American- and South Korean-made socks.

When I first met Mr. Lee, on a chilly day in Seoul last February, I asked him, "Why socks? Why not food or money?" He explained that often food that is smuggled into North Korea by balloon is discovered by North Korean soldiers on patrol and poisoned and later blamed on the South Korean government. Currency is also something that presents a set of problems for those who discover it. American, South Korean and Japanese currency is often the target of frequent crackdowns and results in extreme punishment for those in possession of it. Socks can be hidden easily, traded quickly, or used by those who discover the care packages.

The mood on the way back to Seoul is somber. Very little is said. We all watch one of the many documentaries made about North Korea on the bus. Mr. Lee leads the group of mostly foreigners to a restaurant back in Itaewon for some late lunch and he answers questions over some ambrosial Korean fare.

I can't speak for the others, but I certainly feel a wave of guilt come over myself while listening to the hardships of North Korea firsthand while eating "galbi," Korean-style ribs, and endless servings of side dishes. His stories echo the hundreds I have heard from countless other refugees and defectors. Terrible stories of sacrifices I couldn't imagine making. Stories of coming across parentless "wandering swallows," children abandoned and left to fend for themselves. I have been to nine balloon launches and now act as the managing director of a Korean nongovernmental organization because of these stories. Knowing that these actions that I do here have positive outcomes in a country that is in desperate need of our assistance gives me the drive to help out in any way that I am capable of.

Occasionally, I am asked by friends why I do what I do for North Korea, a country I've never been to. I answer them this way: I do it because I have listened to a North Korean woman talking about her mother, her brother and cousins trapped in the North. Never being able to see her brother or mourn her mother. She is 78. While she is a strong lady, the fight is fleeting in her. She looked into my eyes and I promised her that I would make it my mission, that I would make it my fight. The woman and her brother's passing made the urge to fight hard for North Korea stronger.

Getting up the last Saturday of each month at 5 a.m. is nothing compared to the sacrifice that others make in the name of righteousness and freedom. Mr. Lee's passion and his conviction to do right and pay his promise and good fortune forward is my motivation. Being on the bus bound for the border in the company of these dedicated and compassionate people only furthers my resolve.

We all know what is going on, but many have yet to act — and most never will. Gilbert Parker once said, "In all secrets there is a kind of guilt." This sense of guilt felt by me isn't as a result of a secret, but rather as a result of an expressed apathy that I fear I will never fully understand. 🇰🇷



About the writer: Sabrina Hill is managing director of The Centre for Strategy and Peace in Korea, a Korean nongovernmental organization dedicated to reunification and the establishment of the rule of law and democracy in the North. Her opinions do not represent those of Groove Korea. — Ed.





Seoul, 1968



Seoul, 1968



Osan, 1968

To view more of Neil Mishalovaine's photographs,
go to his website, www.mishalov.com/korean-japanese-photos.html



KEEPING THE DREAM ALIVE

Daniel Tudor on Korea's past, present and future

Interview by John Burton /

Photos by Neil Mishalovoine (1968), Matthew Lamers (2012)

■ Where do you start with a country that rose from the ashes of the Korea War to become not only one of the 15 richest countries in the world, but a model for democracy in Asia? Daniel Tudor, foreign correspondent for the London-based Economist magazine, explains that and more in his new book, "Korea: The Impossible Country."

The book is making waves in South Korea partly because it is one of the few sources available that attempts to go beyond the raw economic figures of Korea's ascent and get into its fast-changing social mores.

Tudor holds degrees from Oxford University and Manchester University and has been in Korea for a number of years.

Groove Korea sat down with him to talk about Korean society and his book.

Groove Korea: How did you get interested in Korea?

Daniel Tudor: It started in 2002 with my best friend at university, who was Korean. He invited me to the World Cup. The whole time was mind-blowingly fun. We carried around a football in the streets of Seoul and held impromptu matches with bystanders. Everybody was your friend. There was a feeling of freedom. There were no rules. I knew it was a magic moment and that it wouldn't last, but there was something in it that I got to love.

I thought I would come back after I graduated and teach English. So I came back in 2004 for what I intended to be one year and then it became two and three years. My original plan was that I would do something I really wanted to do and then go back to London and do investment banking or finance like a lot of my friends were doing, even though I wasn't terribly interested in it.

I taught English for a while here and hated it. Then I got a job as an equity trader with a local firm and then became a researcher at another local brokerage firm. But I soon got fed up being treated as the token foreigner and returned to the U.K. in 2007. I got an MBA at Manchester University, my hometown, and did an internship at The Economist in 2008 during the summer break. I wanted to get into journalism at



Anyang, 1968



Incheon, 1968

Yeongdeungpo Station today



Yeongdeungpo Station in 1968



that point, but I found myself going to Switzerland for a year for a job in finance. Then suddenly I got an email from the Asia editor of *The Economist* asking me if I wanted to go to Korea and I came back in June 2010.

Why did you decide to write the book?

I felt no one was really writing anything about Korea besides the economic miracle stuff and North Korea.

I thought that there was too little attention being devoted to South Korea itself at a time when the society is greatly changing.

People overseas are also becoming increasingly interested in Korea.

Who is the book aimed at?

The person who has some interest in Korea, but wants to know more. The type of person who has seen "Gangnam Style," knows their phone or TV is made in Korea or enjoys Korean food, but doesn't really know anything about this country. It's also geared for the business traveler who might be visiting here for the first time. It's not really aimed at someone who has lived in Korea for a long time, but hopefully they might find something in it, too.

I also thought there is a shortage of books introducing Korea compared to those for China or Japan.

I hoped to fill this little niche. I hope Korean peo-

ple will be curious about it as well as it contains interviews with a lot of interesting people whom they might know.

The original idea was that the book should look at different themes, whether it is music or politics or some other subject.

I also found some of the previous books on Korea patronizing.

I want people to take the book as seriously as I intended it. I didn't want it to be just academic, but a light read as well.

is a danger that you might try to give the reader the last word on absolutely everything. Instead, I tried to give the reader a little bit of everything.

How long did it take to write?

A year and a half. I wrote it on the back of my work for *The Economist*. One of the benefits of working for *The Economist* is that it is not time-consuming compared to other journalism jobs because you usually write maybe one story a week, so I had time to pursue the book.

"I feel that more people will fall off the established career track. There are too many highly qualified people competing for a limited number of traditionally favored jobs. Korea needs to be more creative in its approach. It has to now compete with Germany, the U.K. or the U.S. rather than China."

There were specific people I wanted to talk to and who would discuss a particular subject, so I chose Seoul Mayor Park Won-soon to talk about democracy and a former aide to (late former leader) Park Chung-hee to comment on Korea's economic takeoff.

I wanted to look at Korea on its own merits and avoid comparing it to Japan and China. Because there is so little written on Korea in the West, there

What do you find appealing about Korea?

First, it is changing all the time. I never get bored here.

There's something always going on. I also love the warmth of the people.

When you have a good friend in Korea, that is a really good friend. There is a warmth here that is difficult to find anywhere else. I love my country, but sometimes we're a little cold.

Seoul Station today



Seoul Station in 1968



Why is Korea attracting more international attention?

Partly the cultural aspect, although I think K-pop and Psy will prove to be a temporary fad. Generally, everyone in Asia is interested in Korea now. It has a cool image.

Back home in the U.K., people will know about Korean Premier League players.

People now recognize these big Korean companies, or they are becoming interested in Korean food. I think there is a growing interest in Korea because of its progress in business, politics and culture.

How has Korea changed since you first arrived?

For one thing, there is a lot less staring at foreigners these days. Korea knows more about the outside world now, and vice versa. It is also becoming a little bit more open or socially liberal; for instance, it still isn't easy for someone to be gay here, but it is better than it used to be.

Society is becoming more open-minded. You see more creativity, such as in Hongdae. I see more and more interesting art or street performers there.

Out of necessity, more young people are also starting up interesting businesses because they can't get jobs elsewhere.

Is Korea becoming more individualistic and less conformist?

To some extent. I think there are more artsy, opinionated people who are critical of society. Previously, there was a general acceptance that you went to an elite university and got a prestigious job. But I think there are more people now who say "screw that."

The positive reaction of the outside world to those who were considered outsiders here, Psy and (film director) Kim Ki-duk, for example, is also likely to drive this trend. Because of the positive foreign feedback, they are becoming national heroes in Korea.

I feel that more people will fall off the established career track. There are too many highly qualified people competing for a limited number of traditionally favored jobs.

Korea needs to be more creative in its approach. It has to now compete with Germany, the U.K. or the U.S., rather than China, and the way to do that is to be more imaginative about things. You need these artists and maniacs to work together with the traditional high-achievers. But I don't see people starting to chill out as Korea becomes wealthier.

I think it will remain a hypercompetitive place, although success may be defined in a broader way than just being a doctor or lawyer or working for a chaebol (conglomerate).

Are social mores getting more liberal?

I think young people if they had the choice would be more liberal when it comes to sex or cohabita-

tion. But parents are still in charge because they control the purse strings and there is still a fear of upsetting your parents.

There is nonetheless a big generational difference in Korea. If you go to the clubs in Korea, you now see people openly kissing each other, which wasn't the case before. I do see a lot of things have changed in the last five years, such as greater acceptance of Korean women dating people.

Another thing I have noticed is that people are traveling more overseas and living by themselves. Parents are accepting their children moving out of the home before they get married. In some ways, Korea is more socially liberal than in the U.K. as long as you are seen as not doing it in public.

Are you working on another book?

Yes, one about new pop cultural trends among those in their 20s and 30s, from television and films to social media and street art. It's a different kind of book, but more fun to do.

It will be essentially about the lifestyle of young people in Korea. Foreign interest in Korea is moving away from the image of the economic tiger towards K-pop and Psy and even this indie Hongdae stuff. Korean architecture is getting interesting.

There is a flowering of culture in Korea, especially among the young, whether it is music or internet companies.

I want to give a portrait of the young, 21st-century Korea. 📖

SHEDDING LIGHT ON AN 'IMPOSSIBLE' COUNTRY

BOOK
REVIEW

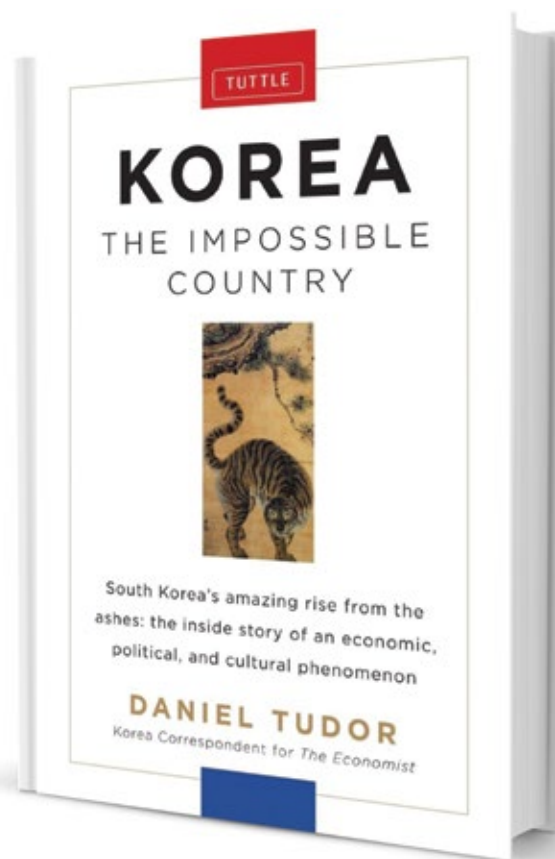
Review by John Burton

Korea: The Impossible Country

By Daniel Tudor

Tuttle Publishing

336 pages. Available at What The Book? in Itaewon.



■ One of the surprising things about South Korea is that more is not written about it for an international audience. Most press attention is usually focused on its evil twin brother, the North, because it makes better copy. But that short-changes the southern half of the peninsula, which is economically successful and has become a role model for the developing world in how to climb out of poverty.

Nevertheless, every 10 years or so, someone does try to tackle the task of writing an introduction to Korea for a global readership. In 1988, it was "Korea: An Introduction" by James Hoare, a British diplomat who later became the U.K. ambassador to North Korea. In 1998, it was Michael Breen's witty and entertaining "The Koreans."

Now Daniel Tudor, the Korea correspondent for *The Economist*, has produced "Korea: The Impossible Country" at a time when the country is becoming better known as a cultural powerhouse, rather than the industrial one that was the focus of the previous books.

The title of Tudor's book refers to the fact that Korea has overcome impossible odds in the 60-year march from a war-torn nation with a sub-Saharan African standard of living to an advanced industrial economy that boasts faster internet speeds than the U.S. Tudor believes that Korea is also impossible "in the way it imposes unattainable targets on its people," creating a hypercompetitive society when it comes to education, physical appearance and careers.

Foreign residents in Korea might add that they find the country "impossible" at times in terms

of dealing with the stubborn nature of its people.

But Tudor has a genuine love for Korea and his goal is to explain what makes its society tick. The book is principally aimed at the general reader outside of Korea with little knowledge of the country.

He crams a wide range of subjects into a relatively slim volume — from domestic politics, media, industrial policy, business customs and South Korean attitudes on North Korea to traditional Korean housing (*hanok*), dating practices, Korean food and the craze for learning English.

At times, the book reads like a string of *Economist* articles run together, which is unfortunate since Tudor has very astute insights on the cultural influences and social attitudes that have shaped Korea, while providing a vivid look at the explosion in the Korean cultural scene that has occurred in the last decade or so.

Tudor suggests that South Korea is entering a new paradigm; one that is increasingly liberal and cosmopolitan. He believes that the conservative, hierarchical and parochial nature of Korean society is on the decline.

Signs of change abound. Korea has embraced the idea of accepting immigrants to reverse a threatened decline in the population as birthrates slump. The increase in multicultural marriages is breaking down ethnic prejudices against foreigners. Women are starting to assert their influence outside the home. There is growing acceptance of gays and other minority groups. These trends are underpinned by an obsession for the new when it comes to technology or fashion.

Tudor does not deny that the path of progress

will be rocky, but he points out that the changes in social attitudes in just the last 10 years has been astonishing. A more intriguing question is whether this will lead to Koreans becoming less driven in achieving what is defined as a successful life — graduating from a SKY university and working for one of the large, family-owned businesses, or *chaebol*.

He notes that the country's achievements have come at a steep price. "South Koreans work so hard in part because a spirit of competition infects virtually all aspects of life. The pressure to outdo other members of society is linked with a need to be seen as a top achiever. The result is that, while Koreans have much to be proud of, they remain an unhappy people."

Tudor believes that this does not necessarily have to be the case. He quotes Yi So-yeon, Korea's first astronaut, who says that "Koreans are so incredible."

"But it's really sad, they just don't realize it. Koreans are very good at being unsatisfied. Sometimes we need to have a break, and some champagne to cheer us up."

While observers often focus on the concept of "*han*" (resentment and suppressed anger) to explain what governs Korean society, the expression of pure joy and exhilaration, known as "*heung*," is also "woven deeply into Korea's traditional culture," notes Tudor.

It is this duality in the Korea psyche that has given the country its distinctive flavor and Tudor captures well the dynamism and excitement that is infusing Korea, and has suddenly made it hip among global trend-spotters. ☺

EXCLUSIVE EXCERPT

'KOREA: THE IMPOSSIBLE COUNTRY'

By Daniel Tudor

Tuttle Publishing

336 pages. Available at What The Book? in Itaewon.

■ K-pop—the sound produced by manufactured boy and girl “idol” groups working for South Korea’s three major record labels, SM, YG, and JYP Entertainment—has enjoyed a boom in recent years. K-pop songs are popular both in Korea and throughout East Asia, in countries like Japan, Thailand, and China, and they are beginning to attract small followings farther afield.

In Korea, K-pop groups battle for chart supremacy with singers of romantic ballads. While the word ballad in English can mean any soft, emotional song, it has more specific connotations in Korea. Ballad singers are trained to produce a distinct warble, which, when combined with piano and over-wrought orchestral arrangements, produces saccharine, clichéd songs. It is common to hear even Koreans say, “All ballads sound the same.”

Mainstream Korean pop music lacks variety, but it was not always this way. In the late 1960s and 1970s, pioneers like Shin Joong-hyun — Korea’s first real rock star — made music that was creative as well as commercial. There have also been genuine maverick outliers, like rock-meets-dance-meets-rap star Seo Tai-ji, who dominated the early Korean music scene in the 1990s. Today, the best music is in the clubs around the student district of Hongdae. Hongdae bands are rarely found on TV or radio, but are gaining increasing popularity through live shows and the Internet.

Park Chung-hee, Yet Again

No individual comes even remotely close to matching President Park Chung-hee’s influence of over modern South Korean society. This holds true not only for the economy and the fierce work ethic of the South Korean people, which he kick-started following his 1961 coup. His influence also extends to pop music.

During the 1970s, as President Park’s regime grew more authoritarian, it banned any song deemed to “disturb social morals”. Musicians were required to include a geonjeon gayo (wholesome song) on every album. This generally meant something with lyrical content that praised the Park administration or exhorted the people to work hard to help build Park’s new nation. Before any record could be released, it had to have the approval of government censors. The result was the development of a popular music culture devoid of imagination, which featured jolly, empty pop songs or lachrymose love ballads, since very little else was deemed acceptable.

Those who defied the censors met with severe restrictions. Korea’s “rock daebu” (godfather of rock), Shin Joong-hyun, was asked to write a song praising the administration in 1972. He declined, saying “I don’t know how to do that. Ask someone else.” Following that demurrer, he became a target for police harassment, and many of his records were banned, including his single “Mi-in” (“Beautiful Girl”), his most popular hit. Mi-in was deemed “noisy and degenerate” by authorities, according to Mr. Shin, a problem made worse by the way young people liked to twist its lyrics: the English translation of the song’s first line would be “I look at her once, I look at her twice, I want to keep on looking,” but kids at the time liked to sing “I screw her once, I screw her twice, I want to keep on screwing.”

In 1975, he was arrested for marijuana use (some hippie fans of his had given the marijuana to him) and jailed. He was also tortured at an infamous detention facility near Namsan in central Seoul and forcibly



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The young singers and their parents are nonetheless fully aware of what lies in store when they sign up: years of hard training in dancing, singing, and foreign languages; endless media appearances and commercial recordings from early morning to late night; no private life; and, a poor deal financially at the end of it all.

committed to a mental institution for several months as part of his punishment. Journalists came to take pictures of him and paraded him through the papers as a crazed drug addict. Following the completion of his sentence, he was prohibited from releasing music or performing publicly, a ban that continued until Park was assassinated.

Shin Joong-hyun

Despite his almost five-year-long enforced hiatus, Mr. Shin is regarded as the fountainhead of rock music in Korea. Having lost his parents to the Korean war of 1950–1953, he “strayed around” for a few years, working as a servant in people’s houses and learning guitar in his spare time. Eventually, he decided to take his guitar along to one of the U.S. Army’s open auditions, announcing himself as “Jackie Shin.” The Eighth U.S. Army took entertainment for its personnel very seriously. Officers flew in from the United States to hear each crop of would-be base musicians and divided them into four groups according to ability. Mr. Shin, who had been listening to Armed Forces Korea Network (AFKN) radio for years, was already well-versed in country, rock n’ roll, blues, and jazz standards and thus was given the top grade. He proved popular with the servicemen of the late 1950s: “The Americans would shout, ‘We want Jackie! We want Jackie!’” he recalls. Following that, he created Korea’s first proper rock band, Add 4, with fellow base performers.

In those days, young Koreans would go to live music cafes such as C’est Si Bon in Mugyo-dong, downtown Seoul, or gather with friends in special music rooms, where they would go to hear a DJ play records rather than dance to a live band. According to Mr. Shin, sophisticated urbanites favoured Western pop sung by the likes of Frank Sinatra and Elvis Presley, while everyone else listened to a form known as trot, a “residue of Japanese colonialism” in that it was a style of music derived from the Japanese enka tradition. In contrast, the U.S. Army stage and AFKN Radio were cutting-edge and served as conduits through which the music of Korea’s future entered the country. Other well-known Korean singers such as Patti Kim, who only retired in 2012 after 54 years in the business, got their first breaks on the U.S. base, all the while absorbing the influence of American music.

Throughout the late 1950s and 1960s, Mr. Shin continued to perform on base, while recording for Korean audiences as well. In those days, there were just two recording studios in Seoul, one of which “was in someone’s house,” he recalls. There were no multi-track recorders back then, so “we all just gathered around one microphone in the middle of the room.” In 1968, he wrote and recorded an album with a female duo named the Pearl Sisters. They too performed on the American base and were due to go off with Mr. Shin to entertain the troops serving in Vietnam. However, when one song from the album Nima became a hit, record companies offered to buy them out of their contract with the US Army. They stayed behind in Seoul and had further success with the single “Coffee Han-jan” (“A Cup of Coffee”).

Because of this, Shin Joong-hyun gained a reputation as someone who could produce hits for others, and a stable of young hopefuls gathered around him. Many went on to become major stars in Korean pop music. Kim Chu-ja, for instance, was a university student who hung around Mr. Shin’s office day in, day out, until he finally gave her an audition. His style of guitar music – increasingly influenced by psychedelic bands like Jefferson Airplane, but with a certain Korean

melodic sensibility – suited her smoky, expressive voice perfectly, and together they made an album titled Neutgi-jeone (Before It’s Too Late). Today, original vinyl copies of this record are highly sought-after by collectors. Those who are interested though can purchase the album on CD, as well as the Shin Joong-hyun Anthology, which gathers the best of his solo work, as well as songs he made with Kim Chu-ja, the Pearl Sisters, Add 4, and Kim Jung-mi, with whom he made a wonderful folk-meets-psychedelic album titled Now in 1973.

Though Shin Joong-hyun’s career was curtailed in 1975 following his incarceration for marijuana use (he claims he used it only one time because it “just made my head hurt and stopped me from concentrating on my music”), his consistent influence and brilliance displayed during the 1960s and early 1970s make him the most legendary popular Korean musician. In a survey in 2010, 7 percent of Koreans picked him as the modern cultural figure who best represents their country. He was the top-ranked musician in that poll.

Meanwhile trot, the music Shin Joong-hyun helped to marginalize in the 1960s and 1970s, is still with us. This style, also sometimes known as *bongjjjak* (an onomatopoeic word derived from its oom-pah rhythm), is popular among old people and can be heard at country festivals and dances held in public parks. Though not respected by music lovers, trot has been undergoing something of a renaissance, with current stars like Jang Yoon-jung choosing to take on the genre. Trot singers make music that is unashamedly fun and over-the-top in its lyrical sensibilities, appealing in particular to people looking for a touch of escapism and something to dance to.

From Folk to Ballad

The 1970s saw the rise of the protest folk song in the Bob Dylan mode. The best-loved creator of protest songs is probably Kim Min-gi, who wrote “Achim Iseul” (“Morning Dew”), a big hit sung by Yang Hee-eun (another one-time Shin Joong-hyun protégé). The song became an anthem for the democratization movement, and Kim, like Shin Joong-hyun, attracted the wrath of the government. He recorded an album in 1971 that contained “Achim Iseul,” and soon after the record was banned and all known copies were recalled and burned. That song in particular was subjected to the severest of restrictions, with cover versions by other artists deemed illegal as well. Nevertheless, dedicated activists, particularly in the universities, always found ways of obtaining underground copies of this and other banned records and distributing them to like-minded friends.

Officially banned from appearing on stage or recording, Kim continued to work, writing plays and musicals that would eventually see the light of day following democratization in 1987. One of his musicals, *Line One*, had a run of thirteen years in Seoul, such was its popularity. Kim also worked as a producer, helping the likes of Kim Kwang-seok to record his first album. Kim Kwang-seok, whose plaintive voice spoke to people’s real emotions, sadly died by his own hand at the age of thirty-one. Having sold five million records, an extraordinary number for a Korean artist, he remains a presence and his status as a Korean artist will never be in doubt.

During the late 1970s and 1980s, probably the biggest star was a singer named Cho Yong-pil, who played pop, rock, and old-fashioned trot style music. Like Shin Joong-hyun, he also got his start playing for the US Army, before becoming a mainstream Korean success. At the

height of his fame, he played a show in front of one million people in the city of Busan. The 1980s was also a time in which the electric guitar returned to the fore in rock groups such as Deulgukhwa and Sanullim. "Big hair rock," influenced by kitschy Western acts like Poison and Whitesnake, made inroads too, as did proper metal bands like Sinawe.

However, the 1980s also saw the rise of the saccharine love ballad. The ballad format in some ways grew out of the acoustic folk song but had a very different kind of spirit and lyrical content. Taking on pop gloss and elements of R&B, it evolved into a distinct sound. Ballad songs today are almost always sung by vocalists trained to be technically flawless but with a cynically over-emotional warble designed to push the right buttons. In each song, the phrase "sarang-hae" ("I love you") crooned at least once is virtually compulsory, particularly at the end of the chorus. Ballads may reflect Korea's tendency towards han culture and emotionalism, but they lack depth, which may be attributable to the environment of censorship that prevailed during the genesis of the genre. Shin Joong-hyun complains that the Park and Chun administrations "didn't like people who think," and so encouraged a music culture with no imagination or artistic value. "This culture has prevailed and is still going on even now," he says.

Seo Tai-ji

The year 1992 saw the arrival of Seo Tai-ji, a one-man revolution in dance, rock, and hip-hop. Extraordinarily for a South Korean, he had dropped out of school because, in his view, it did nothing but destroy creativity. He wrote songs indicting the education system, such as the controversial "Gyoshil Idea" ("Classroom Idea"), which laments the standardization of "the minds of nine million children across the country." Young people loved him, of course, and he quickly earned a status far beyond that of an ordinary pop star as the so-called President of Culture.

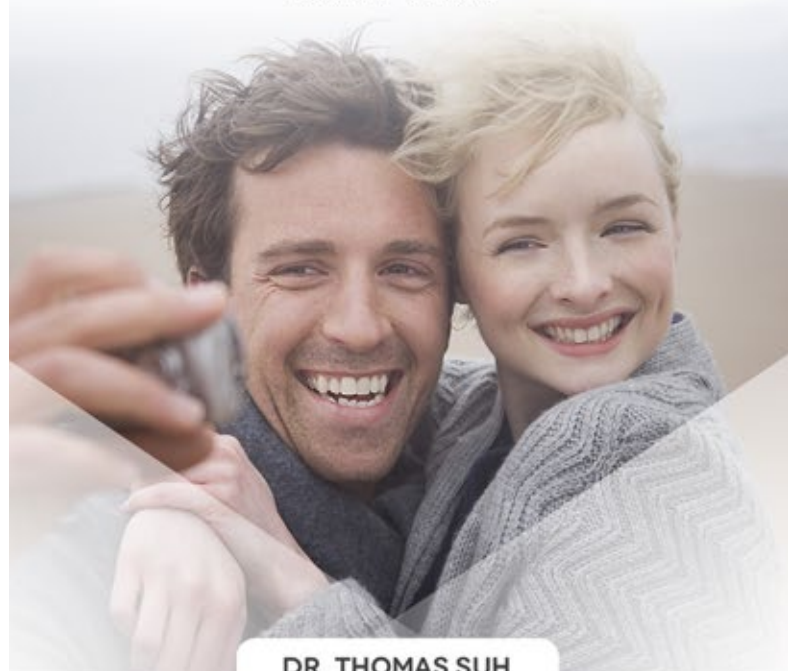
Musically, he was something of a magpie, picking up on new trends in Western music (rap, metal, electronic dance, drum n' bass, and so on) and introducing them to Korean audiences for the first time. His real achievement was to do this in a way that was creative rather than imitative and to move from genre to genre without alienating his enormous fan base. He remains virtually the only artist in South Korea to be both experimental and a consistent chart-topper. If one hears unusual or defiantly un-poppy music in an ordinary Korean main-street shop or on TV, there is a good chance it will be by Seo Tai-ji.

As the man who first popularized rap in Korea, he opened the door for a whole generation of hip-hop artists, who began to find a large audience in the late 1990s and 2000s. The best of these include Drunken Tiger, Dynamic Duo, MC Sniper, and Epik High. Perhaps surprisingly, South Korea now has a well-developed hip-hop culture that goes beyond music and into fashion and dance. There are around ten Korean break dance groups that are considered world class and regularly compete in international competitions.

Hongdae

The late 1990s also saw the flowering of the Hongdae district indie scene. Hongdae is named after Hongik Daehakgyo (Hongik University, a school famous for its art department), but in fact, there are another three major universities close by: Sogang, Yonsei, and Ehwa Womens' University. It was therefore natural that a music scene should develop there. Unfortunately, the milieu of artists that sprang up from Hongdae has had difficulty establishing its music among ordinary Koreans. The average person still listens mostly to pop songs or over-emotive ballads, making the delineation between the mainstream and the underground very sharp in South Korea.

Consequently, it is relatively rare to see Hongdae bands on TV or mentioned in the press. This is unfortunate, because several of the best acts would probably attract a big following and become genuine stars if they came from London or New York and sang in English. With the exception of punk band Crying Nut, and perhaps three or four others, no musicians from the scene are able to



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survive without day jobs. This is in contrast to the British music scene, in which a great many popular bands have graduated from playing small clubs to touring the stadiums of the world.

Thankfully, the scene mentality in Hongdae being what it is—music for music's sake—this does not stop the performers. There are many great acts working in all manner of styles. Among the best are Windy City (a funk/reggae outfit led by hyper-talented singer-drummer Kim Ban-jang), Nastyona (a quirky grunge-meets-piano group), Galaxy Express (highly energetic garage rock), The Black Skirts (tuneful pop-rock), and Heureun ("Flowing") a solo singer who combines electronic beats with folk.

The pick of the crop is Third Line Butterfly, a group that sometimes combines noisy experimentalism with a grunge sensibility and at other times offers the listener a gentle ballad or a standout song like "Gipeun Bam Angae-sok" ("In a Deep Night Fog") that starts out simply but builds into a towering crescendo, driven by one of the most powerful voices you can hear in Korea or anywhere else.

The owner of that voice is Nam Sang-ah, now a veteran of the Hongdae scene. She and fellow bandleader Sung Ki-wan met in 1999: "I was a member of [indie band] Huckleberry Finn, and his group was on the same label as us. He asked me to add vocals to one of his songs, and we just clicked," she recounts. Since then, they have recorded three full-length albums and an EP, and, having been consistently excellent for over a decade, are spoken of in reverential terms by newer Hongdae acts.

Sadly, such appreciation does not extend very far beyond the bounds of the university district. "About once a year, someone recognizes me in the supermarket, when I'm wearing shorts and my hair is a mess—but that's about it," says Ms. Nam. Most people in the Korean indie scene accept this lack of recognition as their lot, but given the outsize talent of some of them, it is still a pity.

The Corporate Era

At the other end of the spectrum lies the "K-pop" of hugely successful girl and boy groups assembled by companies like SM Entertainment and JYP Entertainment. Since the 1990s, these companies have been recruiting sometimes alarmingly young adolescents and putting them through years of training in dancing, singing, and foreign languages in preparation for a future career as teen idols. When deemed ready, the young performers are assembled into groups like 2NE1, the Wondergirls, or 2AM. They are then ready to step out onto the stage in front of hordes of screaming teenage girls.

Some of the songs produced by these labels are extraordinarily catchy. Park Jin-young—for whom JYP Entertainment is named—in particular is a master of melodies that stick in people's heads. Certainly, the increasing enthusiasm for K-pop from all over the world is testament to its charms. Pop star Rain, for example, has played at New York's Madison Square Garden and is

huge all across Asia. In Time magazine's online poll of the "World's Most Influential Person," obsessed fans have clicked and relicked votes for him so often that they put him implausibly ahead of the likes of Barack Obama and Hu Jintao.

K-pop is becoming a big business. In 2010, SM Entertainment recorded revenues of 86.4 billion won (around US\$80m). Clearly, SM is not in the same league as Samsung, but revenue has been doubling every two years recently, putting the firm at the center of a growth industry. The market capitalization (total company value) of SM on the Korean stock market is almost a billion U.S. dollars.

K-pop is becoming a big business. In 2010, SM Entertainment recorded revenues of 86.4 billion won (around US\$80m). Clearly, SM is not in the same league as Samsung, but revenue has been doubling every two years recently, putting the firm at the center of a growth industry. The market capitalization (total company value) of SM on the Korean stock market is almost a billion U.S. dollars. Competitor YG Entertainment is worth US\$250 million. Their performers not only sing but promote all manner of products, from mobile phones to soft drinks. Journalists often get invited to events to celebrate the launch of a new cellphone or television, with special guest performances from the latest boy or girl band. Many of these "idol stars" also cross over into television or film. Lee Hyo-ri for instance, who was a member of a girl band named FinKL, went on to have a solo singing career, before appearing in TV dramas, panel shows, and working as the advertising model for a seemingly infinite list of products from soju and electronic gadgets to Korean beef. This combined music, TV, and sponsorship revenue strategy—which all takes place under the watchful gaze of svengali-managers who have no interest in producing music of genuine emotion—is reminiscent of the Japanese J-pop industry.

Enormous investments of time and money go into creating teen idol bands, so nothing is left to chance: the life and image of each performer is very strictly controlled. Furthermore, the band members' cut of the profits is extremely small. This has led to several high-profile legal showdowns between members of groups such as Dongbangshingi (TVXQ to non-Korean fans) and their creators. The young singers and their parents are nonetheless fully aware of what lies in store when they sign up: years of hard train-

ing in dancing, singing, and foreign languages; endless media appearances and commercial recordings from early morning to late night; no private life; and, a poor deal financially at the end of it all. The would-be star's hope is for

longevity and the eventual lucrative solo career, as experienced by Lee Hyo-ri among others. For the majority, this remains a distant dream. Reportedly, revenues from recorded music have declined by 90 percent from their peak in the late 1990s, mostly as the result of illegal downloading. Where once there were thousands of small record shops across the country, now there are just a handful, usually catering to music-obsessive university students in places like Hongdae and Sinchon (Purple Record and Hyang Music are among the best-known survivors.) The likes of SM Entertainment, whose average listener is a teenage girl, are under pressure to find other sources of revenue. Besides sponsorship, the big labels are now heavily involved in concert promotion and are seeking out new audiences overseas.

Meanwhile, those in Korea over the age of thirty complain that "there's nothing for me to listen to." Pop music there is almost entirely aimed at teenagers, and with a few exceptions—the more mature, soulful pop of bands likeClazziquai or Rollercoaster—it is artistically disappointing. Older listeners are just ignored by the industry. Shin Joong-hyun says, "In England, bands can be influenced by old music. But in Korea there's no connection between the music of the old and the young. And young people seem to think music just comes from mp3 players. They never heard real live music coming out of big speakers," he laments. ☹

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| ATELIER VILLAGE | 공방특별관 |
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BACK IN THE BOOTH

My first in-person vote for a president since 2000

Column by John M. Rodgers / Illustrations by Adela Ordoñez



■ "I don't even know if I'm ready," said an elderly man in jeans and a thick flannel coat as he schlepped into the Moultonborough, New Hampshire polling station to cast his vote in the 2012 general election. A younger man holding the door just ahead of him smiled and said, "You'll do just fine." With a shrug of his shoulders and a grunt, the old man headed into the voting room to show his ID, obtain a

ballot and slip behind a red, white and blue curtain where he'd pick up a No. 2 pencil and fill in the bubbles next to the candidates of his choice. Across New Hampshire, hundreds of thousands did the same thing, electing Barack Obama president and sending three female Democrats to state government.

This was my first in-person vote for a president since 2000. I lived in Seoul for a decade

Walking into the small-town polls made me feel like I was part of something — part of the village, the state, the country; part of democracy.

 **About this column:** John M. Rodgers is a founding editor of The Three Wise Monkeys webzine and currently acts as Groove Korea's editor-at-large. John is back in the United States after a long stint in Korea and will be writing about readjustment. — Ed.

BUMPER CASE MOBICRAB

Built tough, light as a feather

Living abroad through several elections, I'd been spared the demagoguery and enormity of American campaign ads. The worst thing about political campaigning in South Korea is the pick-up trucks that drive the streets covered in signs bearing the image of the candidate while blaring campaign slogans out of giant speakers.

and would fill out my absentee ballot in a rather uneventful manner, not quite certain if it would even get counted. Walking into the small-town polls made me feel like I was part of something — part of the village, the state, the country; part of democracy.

At the voter registration table, three amiable female volunteers hurried to help voters, filling their hands with forms, then ushering the properly-registered toward the voting room where three tables with more volunteers divided voters by last names. When voters reached the proper table, a volunteer would shout out their full names, and nearby a member of the Obama or Romney campaign armed with voter lists would check to see if that name fell on their list. A member of the Obama campaign told me that as the day got later, if a registered and verified Democrat on their list had not shown up, efforts would be taken to contact that person to see what the trouble was.

Living abroad through several elections, I'd been spared the demagoguery and enormity of American campaign ads. The worst thing about political campaigning in South Korea is the pick-up trucks that drive the streets covered in signs bearing the image of the candidate while blaring campaign slogans out of giant speakers. Sometimes the candidates themselves can be seen standing in the bed of the moving truck shouting into a microphone while waving at the annoyed citizenry (it's illegal to stand up in the back of a moving truck here).

Returning to America in late spring, I first chuckled at the ridiculousness of the ad onslaught and the movie-trailer feel of the 30-second ad slots. Luckily, the residence I first returned to was an 1825 home with no cable or Internet — the radio acted as the main source of information along with the local paper. Yet any time I'd travel to someone's home with a TV, up would pop an ad ripping into some candidate with contempt and antipathy. Despite research that says such negative ads work, they surely didn't make anyone feel good about the state of our politics.

Some of my family members stand staunchly for conservative Republicans (or any Republicans), which caused unease as the campaigns rolled along and the election neared. I would always hope the Boston Red Sox were playing — despite the horrible season — because we had little to argue about there.

One day when I drove past a childhood friend's home and saw a Romney/Ryan sign stuck in his lawn, I stopped to ask him what he saw in the pair. Instead of offering something about the two, he tore into Obama's "wasteful spending and misguided economic policies." I steered clear of confrontation. Then in a later message, he wrote rather idealistically, "The wonderful thing is we all have an equal vote and can cast it according to our beliefs, peacefully and without being chastised for them."

Waiting for my older brother to fill out some voter registration forms on Nov. 6, I watched people come and go, most smiling, some with looks of uncertainty (like the old man), all determined to cast their vote behind those red, white and blue curtains. And despite the negative ads, the mendacity and hyperbole spread by certain media and the disagreements with family and friends, it felt good to be back in America, at my local polling station, participating in our democracy.



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DESTINATIONS

Edited by Josh Foreman / joshforeman@groovekorea.com



LESSONS LEARNED FROM TRAVELING AROUND THE WORLD

Think flying to Thailand makes you an intrepid traveler? Think again

Story and Photos by Elizabeth Groeschen



■ I thought that living abroad for the majority of the past six years and traveling widely around Europe and Asia during that time would have prepared me, at least a little, for a year-long trip around the world. After 50 days, I'm here to tell you that I've learned a thing or two about long-term travel. Having a "home" in a foreign country or taking two-week trips here and there simply don't prepare you for the madness that can sometimes be your round-the-world journey.



About the writer: Follow Elizabeth as she goes around the world at www.thiskentuckygirl.com, on Twitter, [elizadele](#), or Instagram, [thiskentuckygirl](#) — Ed.

Lesson 1

Choose your backpack (or travel bag) wisely. To say my relationship with my Osprey Farpoint 55 is contentious is an understatement. I foolishly thought that because I was backpacking around the world, I needed to buy a "backpacker's" backpack with a matching daypack.

I was wrong. Forget all of the blog posts you read about what kind of backpacks work best for the professional travel bloggers you've been following for the past year. I would give anything for my trusty leather shoulder bag and my grade-school style Jansport backpack I used to travel with. Go with what is comfortable for you. The only rule you need to keep in mind is that you and your bags must be able to fit on the back of a motorcycle when you need to hitch a last-minute ride.

Lesson 2

Choose your travel partner wisely. (That is, if you intend to have a partner.) I knew I picked a winner when he humored me — and my food poisoning issues — throughout our trek in Sapa, Vietnam. Before the two-day trek, he assured me that I would not poop my pants. This was followed by, "You can at least make it to a rice paddy!" Luckily, neither happened, but being able to joke about either possibility makes for one stellar partner.



Lesson 3

Don't leave your first aid kit behind while you're trekking days away from modern medicine. I knew I put some meds in my daypack, but assumed some of it was Imodium. Wrong. It was all Claritin, and I was in trouble. Which leads me to ...



Forget all of the blog posts you read about what kind of backpacks work best for the professional travel bloggers you've been following for the past year. Go with what is comfortable for you.

Lesson 4

Don't be afraid of the Vietnamese pharmacy. Furthermore, don't be afraid of holding your trekking group up as you duck inside to explain to the pharmacist what's wrong. They will sell you the drugs you need, let you read the English label before you go, and you will get better.



Lesson 5

Maybe it's not such a good idea to buy and wear barefoot shoes for the first time when going on a 15-kilometer trek. I thought: "Oh, these will be perfect water shoes!" while failing to see the big barefoot shoe label upon purchase. Oh, for the love of calf muscles! I have never appreciated Tiger Balm more.

Lesson 6

Don't pick the mattress closest to the stairs or hostel bed closest to the door. The one in the back, the furthest one away from the stairs, door and general foot traffic is bound to be quieter and less used, therefore less smelly.

Lesson 7

Don't buy it unless it's exactly what you want, and you know exactly how you're going to get it home. I'm a souvenir junkie. I once carried a 15-pound bronze Buddha statue around China for two weeks because I simply couldn't leave the country without it. When my mother brings this up and rolls her eyes at my admitted problem, I staunchly say having sore shoulders for two weeks was totally worth it. Buying something that is close, but not exactly what you want is not worth it.

This trip around, I couldn't leave a parade-style dancing dragon in Vietnam. Unfortunately, I was forced to carry my newly purchased giant dragon costume from Ho Chi Minh City to Phnom Penh because it wouldn't fit in the largest Vietnamese surface-mail box. Obviously, buying smaller, lighter items is to your advantage. After two months, I have noted, but haven't exactly learned this lesson.

Lesson 8

Don't expect things to move as fast as you would like when you show up to volunteer at a legitimate organization. No expensive enrollment fee? A friend recommended it to you? That doesn't mean they are 100 percent organized or even prepared for you to be there. I was ready to roll up my sleeves and help build a new school, or cultivate a vegetable garden, or drop some serious knowledge on some English students. But even as reputable as the organization was, things moved at a much slower pace than I expected. In addition, volunteering for one week simply was not enough time.



The list goes on.

I should have set up a different bank account that didn't charge an exorbitant fee every time I took money out of my account. I have no need for the doorstep that travel inventories told me to bring. My two cotton scarves that morph into blankets and towels (even a cover-up at the public shower) when needed might be the most versatile things in my backpack. Haggling in a market is much more fun when you realize it's just like playing a round of Texas Hold 'em. Patience is a virtue until you find yourself on a local bus that stops every few meters, making the trip three hours long instead of the 30 minutes you had calculated. You quickly learn that patience is much, much more than a silly virtue when you're traveling around the world. It's a way of life.

If you become a bit tired of this way of life, which happens, even though you know it's all worth it, break down and order something continental instead of local. Skype your mom, followed by your best friend. Sleep in late at your \$5 guesthouse, don't do anything Lonely Planet recommended, and download an episode of the "The Walking Dead" to get you through. See you at the airport. 🍷



flights for under \$500

Story and Photos by Matthew Lamers

■ Rising competition among low-cost air carriers means one thing for you, the intrepid traveler — lower prices and more destinations to choose from.

It wasn't long ago that a flight to and from Korea would set you back 1 million won. But with the arrival of several international and Korean budget airlines, there are more places around Asia that are ac-

cessible for less than \$500. And the list is growing.

Following is our editor's selection of 12 flights for under \$500 round-trip. If you're flexible, you can even pick up tickets for well under \$300. Just don't expect a free blanket and allow some time in your schedule for delays — remember, these are budget airlines.

Incheon-Taipei, Taiwan
\$230 round-trip

T'way Air
www.twayair.com
Book now and fly immediately
Promotion



Incheon-Tokyo, Japan
\$240 round-trip

Estar Jet
www.eastarjet.com
Book now and fly immediately
Promotion

Gimpo-Cebu, Philippines
\$329 round-trip

Air Busan
www.airbusan.com
Book now and fly from March
Promotion



Incheon-Macau, China
\$330 round-trip

Jin Air
www.jinair.com
Book now and fly immediately
Promotion

Incheon-Bangkok, Thailand
\$340 round-trip

t'way Air
www.twayair.com
Book now and fly from March
Promotion



Incheon-Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
\$352 round-trip

Air Asia
www.airasia.com
Book now and fly in February
Promotion

Incheon-Okinawa, Japan
\$353 round-trip

Jin Air
www.jinair.com
Book now and fly any time
Regular price



Incheon-Sapporo, Japan
\$366 round-trip

Jin Air
www.jinair.com
Book now and fly any time
Regular price

Incheon-Kalibo, Philippines
\$450 round-trip

Zest Air
www.flyzest.com
Book now and fly any time
Promotion



Incheon-Phuket, Thailand
\$498 round-trip

Air Asia
www.airasia.com
Book now and fly in February
Promotion

Incheon-Kota Kinabalu, Malaysia
\$499 round-trip

Estar Jet
www.eastarjet.com
Book now and fly in late January
Promotion



Incheon-Vientiane, Laos
\$500 round-trip

Jin Air
www.jinair.com
Book now and fly from late February
Regular price

DESTINATIONS

Edited by Josh Foreman / joshforeman@groovekorea.com

THE LARGEST PILGRIMAGE IN THE WORLD

90 million people will descend on the town of Allahabad in January

Story and Photos by Dirk Schlottmann





Allahabad, Uttar Pradesh state, India

■ Millennia ago, gods and demons battled over a pitcher that was said to be filled with the “nectar of immortality.” While they were fighting, four drops fell to the ground, sanctifying the cities of Allahabad, Haridwar, Ujjain and Nasik in northern India.

Today, millions pilgrims from around the world flock to these cities on the banks of the Ganges. Hindus, Buddhists and Jains bathe in the holy river to wash away their sins, a ceremony that is necessary to attain “moksha,” or liberation from the cycle of birth and death.

Visitors come throughout the year, but the event drawing the largest crowds is the festival Kumbh Mela, or the Feast of the Pitcher. It is characterized as the biggest Hindu gathering and the largest assembly of pilgrims in the world. With the exact timing and location of the festival determined by the Sun and Jupiter's orbits, the Maha (great) Kumbh Mela falls in Allahabad only once every 12 years.

Around 90 million people are expected to descend on the town of Allahabad between Jan. 27 and Feb. 25.

Those with the courage to plunge into these crowds will be rewarded with unforgettable, unique

Those with the courage to
plunge into these crowds will be
rewarded with unforgettable,
unique impressions of devotion,
spirituality and Indian
religious culture.

impressions of devotion, spirituality and Indian religious culture.

The main purpose of Kumbh Mela is the ritual bath. It takes place at a particularly holy place, at a particularly favorable time. On the main bathing day, the Mauni Amavasya Snan, or New Moon Day in January, it is estimated that 30 million pilgrims will wash themselves at the confluence of the Ganges and Yamuna rivers.

Millions of devotees from India and all over the world will take the long, and often arduous, journey to the Kumbh Mela to redeem themselves of their

bad karma. Participating in specialized forms of religious adherence, Yogis, Mahatmas, Sadhus and Sannyasins all emerge from their normal seclusion in an ashram to come to this place. Ascetics and hermits, practicing varying forms of abstinence from worldly pleasures, also leave their meditation centers in the caves and forests of the Himalayas only for this occasion.

In addition to the bathing, witnessing the Sadhus has become another big attraction of the Kumbh Mela. With their exotic appearance, Sadhus have become a symbol of Indian spirituality. The most conspicuous group among the Sadhus are the Naga Babas. Unless you're willing to make the pilgrimage up to the Himalayas, they can only be seen at the Kumbh Mela.

The Nagas see themselves as warriors, protectors of Sanatana Dharma (Hinduism). As they belong to the Shaiva sect, they have matted locks of hair and their naked bodies are covered in ashes to simulate Lord Shiva. Traditionally, being the first in the river is a privilege that goes to the Naga Babas — a right they will defend with force if necessary.



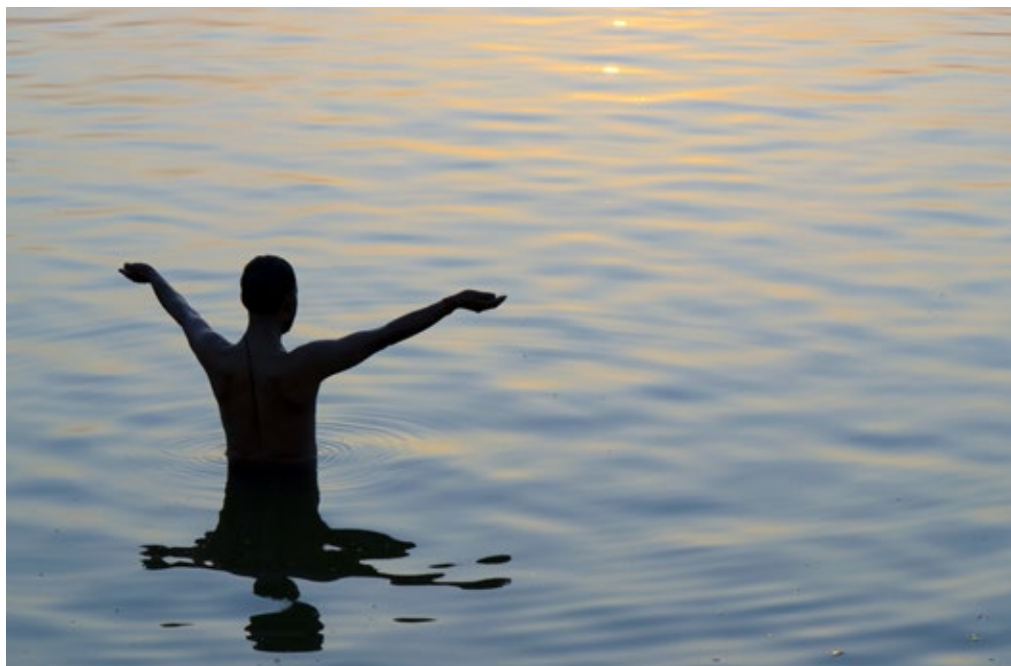
Important dates for Kumbh Mela

Jan. 27 (Sunday) - Paush Purnima | Feb. 6 (Wednesday) - Ekadashi Snan | Feb. 10 (Sunday) - Mauni Amavasya Snan (main bathing day)
Feb. 15 (Friday) - Basant Panchami Snan | Feb. 17 (Sunday) - Rath Saptami Snan
Feb. 18 (Monday) - Bhisma Ashtami Snan | Feb. 25 (Monday) - Maghi Purnima Snan

Sadhvi (female Sadhu) at the Kumbh Mela. Women are rarely seen in the brotherhood.



A pilgrim bathes in the early morning.



Shahi Snan — a colorful procession of Sadhus announces the official beginning of the Kumbh Mela





MALAYSIA'S CULTURAL MOSAIC

A city's history unites its people

Story and Photos by Colin Roohan

Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia —

■ I am struck by the unfamiliarity of everything as I weave a path through the market; some stalls covered, some exposed to the blazing sun. I feel disoriented.

"Why the hell are those peanuts bright orange?"

"Watch out for that scooter!"

"Mmmm something smells incredible."

"I wonder how much batik fabric is here."

"That guy looks friendly; ask him for a portrait."

My mind zings in circles, bouncing off of the strange sounds. The beautiful Malaysian flag flaps in the wind — it catches sunlight in its own sun and is perfectly vibrant, the reds and blues waving in unison provide a gorgeous backdrop.

I witness a man giving a demonstration for a hand-powered sewing machine that looks like a small stapler; apparently I need one to collect extra dust at home.

A young lady organizes stacks of batik sarongs to entice potential clients.

I look slowly to my left to catch an elderly woman, half hidden by what look like peapods on steroids, staring right at me with a look of utter indifference;

it's as if she is almost looking through me. In my mind, she is saying to herself: "Why would he want to come here? The Petronas Towers are several miles that way." I take her picture, and then she looks away.

I start my trek back to the train, breaking for a Coca-Cola. An Indian man rings me up and pops the top off my bottle for me. I walk on, passing a group of Malay men sitting on their motorbikes outside of an electronics store. They are huddled together, yelling excitedly. As I move closer, I see they are watching the WWF.

This is Kuala Lumpur — bustling, growing, evolving. The market is emblematic of the cultural mosaic that makes up the beautiful country. The chaos is organized. Thousands working both with and against each other — progressing, moving forward.

Despite modernization, KL has retained an eclectic sense of place; the wide array of cultures, religions, arts and languages has helped form a society of hard-working, intelligent and generous people. How did so many different people come to live in one place? And what is the social fabric that keeps them together?

This is Kuala Lumpur — bustling, growing, evolving.
The market is emblematic of the cultural mosaic that makes up the beautiful country. The chaos is organized. Thousands working both with and against each other — progressing, moving forward.

The city's history

Back in 1850, a group of miners in search of tin ended up in an area where two rivers (the Klang and Gombak) met. The muddy area was named Kuala Lumpur and the city was born. A year later, many of the original miners had passed away due to disease, but word of the area's potential monetary benefits spread. Organized crime formed just as rampantly as the city was growing, and it turned KL into a noisy and violent boomtown.

It didn't take long for the regional sultan to appoint a Kapitan Cina, or Captain of the Chinese, who would administer the territory and enforce the law.

The first two Kapitans could not compete with the local gangs and left the position. The third, Yap Ah Loy, was so successful at his job that he is often credited as a founding father of Kuala Lumpur.

In the early 1880s, Kapitan Yap's health began to deteriorate. This, in conjunction with British reformation, made room for a new official, Resident General. The Resident General would be a local representative for the British government, and his diplomatic functions were a form of indirect rule.

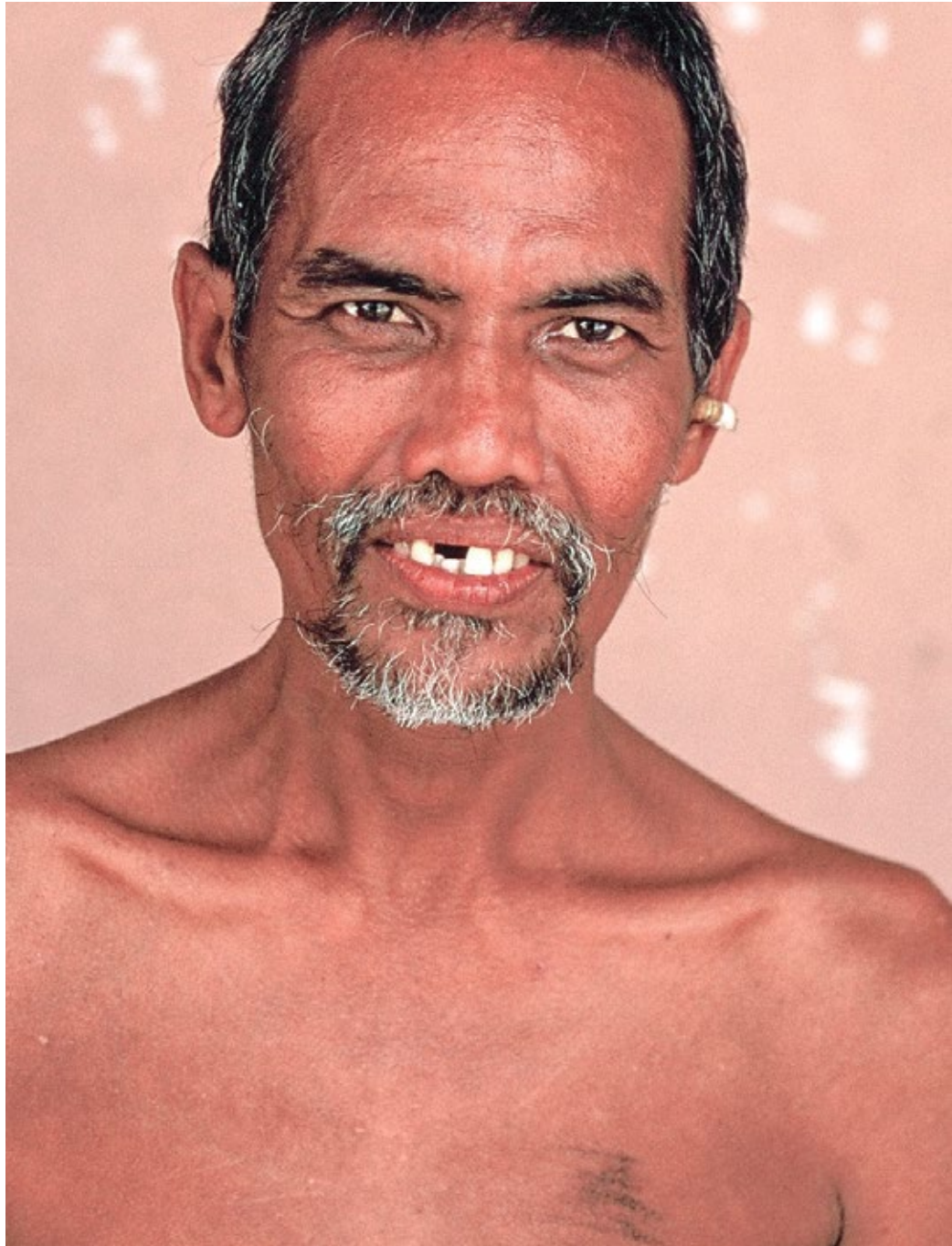
Sir Frank Swettenham was made Resident General of the Federated Malay States and would serve in Selangor. The area continued to flourish until Jan. 11, 1942, the day Japanese forces began occupying the country. As was the case with many other countries, the quality of life under Japan's rule was miserable. The Chinese population working in KL was treated awfully just because of their ties to China. If they weren't tortured or killed, they were sent to work on railway projects until they eventually couldn't keep up with the workload.

After the war, the British administration continued their sovereignty over Kuala Lumpur; however, this was short lived. Within a few years' time, elections in Kuala Lumpur saw a majority of Malay and Chinese officials governing in office. In 1957, Malaysia made a monumental change when the Federation of Malaya (consisting of nine Malay states and two British settlements, Penang and Malacca) achieved independence from the Commonwealth of Nations.

Gaining independence was undeniably an overwhelming step for this small nation. Even though they had learned to work with each other under the British umbrella, the different ethnic groups in Malaysia began wanting different things from what the government could provide them.

In 1969, a post-election state of emergency was declared as riots and fighting erupted in the streets of Kuala Lumpur, resulting in much of the city being damaged and the Malaysian Parliament being suspended.

Indeed, the social and ethnic harmony that has been achieved here is a fragile one. The ruling Malays have been accused of discrimi-



nating against the country's large populations of Chinese and Indians, who enjoy few of the advantages in government, the economy and higher education that the Malays enjoy.

Whether having a bowl of curry, celebrating the Chinese New Year or listening to evening prayers from outside of a mosque, remember that mistakes are often the things that help us grow. Kuala Lumpur has witnessed mistakes in the past and will see more in the future. The sense of hope that propels KL cannot be denied; it is everywhere — on the smiling faces of people walking the streets and among merchants engulfed in a barter.

This city will only continue to interact, to share and flourish. 🌐

Kuala Lumpur has witnessed mistakes in the past and will see more in the future. The sense of hope that propels KL cannot be denied; it is everywhere — on the smiling faces of people walking the streets and among merchants engulfed in a barter.



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ARE YOU WEARING YOUR TRAVEL PANTS?

Avoid tourist traps with Travel Pants Korea

Story by Chris Backe / Photos courtesy TPK

■ What happens when you're dissatisfied with touring as part of a group? You go on Facebook, complain to friends, vow to never go on one of their trips again — and that's usually the end of it.

For two expats, it was an opportunity to start a company.

Angel Moreno and Daniel Ahn met in 2010. "We found that travel groups rarely met our expectations, and wanted to share our love for travel and sharing with other people," they told Groove Korea.

In May 2012, they started Travel Pants Korea, a tour company aiming to show people a new side of Korea. "Daniel set up the company and I assisted him with the

marketing and planning," Moreno recounted, his own background being in public relations and marketing.

If you've heard of Travel Pants Korea, it's probably because a friend went on one of their trips or through their Facebook page. Their website, travelpantskorea.com, was only recently launched.

The Facebook strategy worked: With more than 1,000 "likes" collected over a matter of four months, they're reaching a swath of the folks who enjoy traveling the most. The website has even more ambition behind it, complete with sections dedicated to food, fashion and events, along with travel.

With the inaugural trip to Jeju held in September, fo-

“We like to travel in more of a ‘flashpacker’ style, with a big focus on personal touches. If it’s something we wouldn’t recommend to our closest friends, we’re not going to do it.”

— Angel Moreno



“We really take care in curating value-driven, but still fabulous, travel experiences for our clients – all with a very personal touch.” — Angel Moreno

llowed soon after by a canoe trip in Chuncheon, they’re hitting a number of opportunities – both on and off the beaten path. “We especially loved the idea of canoeing in handmade, wooden Korean canoes, and enjoying dalk galbi (chicken ribs) where it was created,” said Moreno. “Aside from the crazy autumn traffic, it was a successful trip!”

Last month, they organized a trip to Jeonju, North Jeolla Province, complete with a food and makgeolli (Korean rice wine) experience and a night in a hanok, or traditional Korean house. They also had a Christmas wine train tour.

January will feature an ice fishing tour to Inje, Gangwon Province, with a ski trip being planned for later this winter.

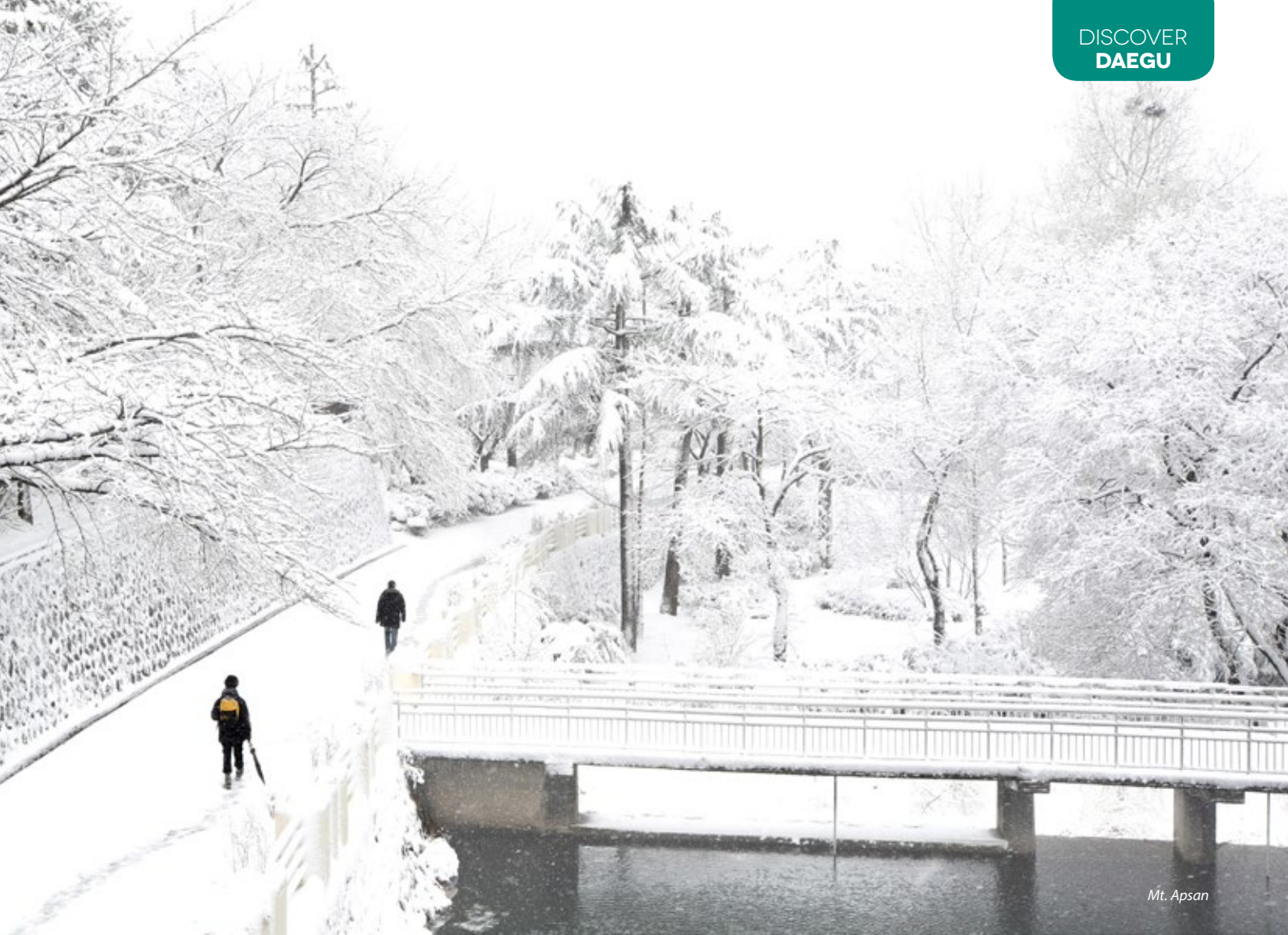
What would you expect on a Travel Pants Korea trip?

“We like to travel in more of a ‘flashpacker’ style, with a big focus on personal touches. If it’s something we wouldn’t recommend to our closest friends, we’re not going to do it,” Moreno said.

To that end, a fair amount of research has to be undertaken, including staying at nice hotels and eating at lesser-known restaurants. This stands in sharp contrast to your typical tour agency, which aims to hit the tourist traps of the country without necessarily tailoring itineraries to be unique.

“We really take care in curating value-driven, but still fabulous, travel experiences for our clients – all with a very personal touch,” said Moreno.

You can’t ask for much more than that.



Mt. Apsan

DAEGU'S FRONT YARD

Climb a mountain, kick up your feet at a hot spring, or pray for better luck at Gatbawi

Column by Sean Choi

■ In the December issue, I took you through Daegu's Old Alley. This month, we continue our exploration of Daegu's outdoors, including of the region's temples.

Daegu has two well-traversed mountains. The first is called Mt. Ap ("Ap" means front) and it is located only about 10 minutes from downtown. Locals consider Mt. Ap to be Daegu's front yard; it's the city's playground. For kindergarteners, it's the site of their first picnic. For adolescents, it's where they might go on their first date. For everyone else, it's a popular place to jog.

In the spring, the mountain is covered with cherry blossoms, attracting visitors from around the country. I recommend taking the cable car (7,500 won per person; closes at 5:30 p.m.) to the 600-meter-high peak to get a magnificent view of the city.

The mountain has three valleys — Keungol Valley, Anjiranggol Valley and Gosangol Valley — and two small temples — Eunjeok-sa and Anil-sa — at

Mt. Ap

Mt. Ap Park Office: (053) 625-0967

Cable car hours: 9 a.m.-5:30 p.m.

Directions:

Take city buses 300, 410, 410-1, 750 or Dalseo village bus 4 or 4-1

Daedeok Sikdang

Daegu, Nam-gu, Daemyeong 9-dong 552-7

(053) 656-8111

Open 24 hours

Tuesday Morning

Daegu, Nam-gu, Daemyeong 9-dong 493-38

(053) 656-7000

Open daily 11 a.m.-12:30 a.m.

Mt. Palgong

Mt. Palgong Park Office: (053) 983-8586

Directions:

Take bus 401

Donghwa-sa

(053) 985-0980, (053) 981-6406

Mt. Palgong Hot Spring

(053) 985-8080



Mt. Ap

which you can rest your feet and drink spring water. The foot of the mountain is home to some famous restaurants such as Daedeok Sikdang and Tuesday Morning.

Daedeok Sikdang — more than 40 years old — is a local favorite. The best-selling dish is daro gukbap (4,000 won), a hearty meat and vegetable broth with a bowl of rice on the side. This soup is rich in garlic and red pepper paste. The locals scarf this stuff down when they're hung over.

Tuesday Morning is a Western-style restaurant that serves pasta and steak. It's a popular date spot.

Mt. Palgong is known more for its spiritual significance than its landscapes. This 1,192-meter-high mountain gave Daegu's citizens safe harbor during the Korean War (1950-1953).

For many urbanites, it's also a place of escape. I used to drive here with my friends and hang out at any of the many restaurants at its base.

Nestled on the mountain is the most visited and largest temple in the region — Donghwa-sa. The temple provides programs like temple stay and Zen meditation for visitors. A cable car runs from the temple area to the peak of the mountain — 1.2 kilometers away. It also has the largest open-air hot spring in Korea.

Another site of significance is Gatbawi, a 4-meter-tall stone Buddha with

a 15-centimeter-thick stone hat. It sits atop Gwanbong Peak, which is 850 meters above sea level. You can get there by following the stone steps for an hour from the Gatbawi restaurant district. Gatbawi's official name is "Gwanbong Seokjo-yeorae-jwasang," which means Gwanbong sitting stone Buddha. Folklore has it that this Buddha will grant one wish to each sincere individual. On the first day of every month — and when university entrance examinations are held — this place is packed with people from all over Korea. It's also a popular destination on New Year's Day, as people pray for good luck in the new year.

Many of the restaurants in the area are suitable for vegetarians. Sanchae bibimbap, or mountain vegetable mixed rice, is probably the most popular item on these restaurants' menus.

Another famous food is napjak mandu, or flat dumplings. You won't have a hard time finding napjak mandu anywhere in and around Daegu, but it's especially prevalent in Gyodong or Seomun market; it's flat and made of vegetables, wheat and soybeans.

If you want to try it in Seoul, I recommend going to a makgeolli joint in Itaewon called Jeon. It's located across from Bungalow, behind the Hamilton Hotel. 🍷



Tuesday Morning

Napjak mandoo



Daedeok Sikdang



Each order is served on two soft, lightly fried corn tortillas with bare bones pico de gallo (tomatoes, onions, lime and fresh cilantro), full-fat sour cream, smooth avocado crema, a sprinkling of cheddar and hot sauce.

Bucking the tony taco trend

■ Hidden on a nondescript side street just minutes from Hongdae's bustling shopping district is Gusto Taco, the neighborhood's top spot for Mexican food.

Décor is minimal; six mismatched stools tucked under a counter, wood paneling and some framed magazine articles make up the entirety of the interior. Food is cheap and filling (at 3,500 won for an order, their tacos might be the cheapest in the city), while staff are relaxed.

Like your favorite childhood pizza joint, Gusto Taco is a place that feels instantly familiar — a Hongdae “Cheers,” complete with its very own hipster Ted Danson, Gusto's owner and head chef Aaron Allen.

And the food?

The restaurant's homespun simplicity belies a depth of flavor and dedication to craft. In fact, after two years of searching for good Mexican food, I can say Gusto just may have the finest tacos in the country.

For Allen, who co-owns the eatery with his wife Hye-jin, less is more. “A great taco is simplicity and time,” he said. “It means not putting in anything that doesn't belong there.”

Tall and sinewy with short, cropped hair and a salt-and-pepper beard, he's the kind of guy you can't help but get comfortable with right away. The type you end up talking to about new music, string theory or relationship problems without ever realizing you've entered into conversation. He is the restaurant's gracious, intelligent and empathetic core.

Since leaving his job as chief technology officer for a hedge fund on Wall Street (he previously lived in the U.S. taco capitals of Austin and San Francisco as well) and moving to Seoul to have a child in 2010, Allen has quietly built up a legion of devoted followers with his quality-first approach.

For eight hours each day he slow-cooks whole slabs of chicken, pork and beef from a local butcher. Tortilla dough is ground from whole corn and also slow-cooked on the premises. Essential items that cannot be found in Korea (peppers and hot sauces from the States, cheeses from Italy) are imported. The result: high-quality, consistent food.

Throughout the five-item menu, meats are tender and flavorful (stew-like in the case of the pork and beef, yet slightly crispy). The tortillas are cornier than average.

Gusto has a wide selection of reasonably-priced Mexican beer, and vegetarian options are available. While the burrito and quesadilla are both worth a try, the restaurant's signature item is pork tacos. Each order is served on two soft, lightly fried corn tortillas with bare bones pico de gallo (tomatoes, onions, lime and fresh cilantro), full-fat sour cream, smooth avocado crema, a sprinkling of cheddar and hot sauce.

“They're spicy and they're greasy, but the right kind of greasy ... like a little bit of heaven on crack,” Allen said of his prized creation.



The man behind the taco

Co-owner and head chef Aaron Allen



I call it Mexican traditionalism done right: an efficient balance of flavor and texture.

Whatever the description, everything at Gusto feels expertly constructed. The right amount of saltiness, the right amount of greasiness, acidity and spice; when Allen or his wife make the food (and they always do), there is no need to add anything else. Extra sauces are conspicuously absent from the dining area (too many extra sauces lying around is a telltale sign of low flavor confidence).

For Aaron Choe, a Hongdae-based DJ, foodie and Gusto fanatic, nowhere else compares. "I purposely get hung over, just to eat there," he told Groove Korea. "But seriously, the tacos are transcendent."

As Allen said, "These tacos are some of the best that I've ever tasted. I'm pretty proud of them in that sense. Once you have the best of something in a category, you can go anywhere with that. But you've got to get to that point and it takes a couple years."

For every Allen there are plenty of confused restaurateurs out there — men and women who lack clarity of purpose. They have huge menus and try to turn fast food into upscale sit-down dining. The reality is that a taco is one of the simplest foods in the world (the word taco originally comes from "wad" in Spanish). Mess with it too much, and it becomes convoluted.

At a time when new Korean-Mexican fusion eateries are proliferating in Seoul, each one trying to follow the same, tired blueprint, Gusto is a refreshingly unpretentious alternative.

Sure, it may not be much to look at, but they make one hell of a taco. 🌮



"These tacos are some of the best that I've ever tasted. I'm pretty proud of them in that sense."

— Aaron Allen, owner

Gusto Taco

Seoul, Mapo-gu, Seogyo-dong 342-16
(02) 3142-8226

Gusto Taco is open from 12 p.m. to 9 p.m., or until they sell out, and closed on Mondays. As seating is limited, customers are encouraged to call ahead.



Story by Mishka Grobler / Photos by Ciaran Noonan

There's something about dalk galbi



■ Dalk galbi — the spicy sauce, the cabbage and kimchi, the stir-fried chicken; it's cheap enough for students and tasty enough for anyone. The stuff is just good. And no one does dalk galbi better than Yoogane.

A testament to this is the 31-year history of the chain. Started in 1981, Yoogane is now a booming franchise, from the myriad eateries in Seoul to branches in Busan, Jeju and recently, the Philippines. The Myeong-dong branch is highly popular with Koreans, as the waiter assured me, and is bursting at the seams on weekends — so much so that a second restaurant opened up three minutes down the road.

The menu is limited, with dishes including marinated chicken, squid, rice, kimchi, vegetables and a healthy dose of gochujang (hot pepper paste). But the little that they do, they do well. The most variation you can hope for is to change your rice to ramyeon, and throw in a couple of extras, which include cheese-stuffed tteok (rice cakes), sweet potato and mozzarella for those of us who have a tendency to choke on all things spicy. As with most Korean restaurants, there is an all-you-can-eat, self-service "sides" table where you can top up on more kimchi, pickled radish, or cabbage salad with kiwi dressing.

The crowd favorites are marked on the menu — marinated dalk galbi served in a skillet with onions, cabbage, potatoes and ddeok, and their marinated dalk galbi fried rice. Prices average between 6,000 won and 10,000 won per person, which makes this chain a good, informal place for couples, friends and families alike.

So it back, don an apron and enjoy the orange, red and yellow hues of hippie-tinted walls while your waiter does all the hard work for you. 🍴

Yoogane

Seoul, Jung-gu, Chungmu-ro 2-ga 66-6
(02) 775-3392

For more info, visit www.yoogane.co.kr.

Directions

From Myeongdong Station, line 4, exit 6, turn right after Uniqlo. Yoogane is on your left.



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Column by Read Urban / Photos by Elizabeth Papile
Find this and other recipes at www.groovekorea.com

Pulled pork in a slow cooker, fast and easy


■ I was recently given a Crock-Pot from a coworker leaving the country and spent a few good hours sitting and staring at the thing on the kitchen table. I'd used a slow cooker before, but never to any great effect. I'll admit that I can be impatient at times, and I may have, at one point, not given a slow-braised fennel and lamb shank recipe the oven time it deserved. Since then, however, I've decided that Korea would be the turning of a new leaf and that I would learn to embrace the Crock-Pot.

I've never been the "set it and forget it" kind of guy. I've always wanted to be interactive in the kitchen; chopping, stirring, adjusting the temperature, keeping an eye on things. It took a while for me to be okay with the idea of turning on a switch and coming back eight hours later. Now, the simple Crock-Pot has become a solution for some of the more mundane tasks in my life. I now find myself using the slow cooker overnight for most things. For example, throwing a used chicken carcass in there after dinner results in rich chicken stock the next morning. The same goes for beans (or at least those that take a long time to cook). One of the perks of adding a slow cooker to your routine is that it becomes easier to have some consistency in the ingredients you keep on hand. As a result, my freezer is full of chicken stock and my fridge is

perpetually ready for burritos, rice and beans, or soup at a moment's notice.

As impressive as this all may sound, I still haven't delved too deep into the world of Crock-Pot cooking. There are cookbooks and blogs out there devoted to replicating a range of techniques in the culinary world, but I don't have the time for "Upside-down Pineapple Cake ... in the Crock-Pot!" or "Slow-cooked Deep Dish Pizza." I have accepted this as my fate while I still reside in Korea, and realize that there are some things I will never recreate. (Note to the reader: I don't really like pineapple upside-down cake anyway, nor do I care to make it at home.)

The recipe this month is for pulled pork in the slow cooker. I don't make any claims that this is anywhere close to authentic pulled pork, but it is good. The dish is hearty, cheap and one of the easiest things you can do with your day. The recipe is foolproof as long as you stick to some important guidelines. First, use good ingredients. Pork shoulder with a healthy amount of fat is the most important thing (along with fresh spices). Second, make sure to let the pork soak in the rub overnight in the fridge. And finally, keep it on low and give it at least eight hours.

Find yourself a slow cooker. It will change your life. 



Pulled pork

- 2 tablespoons brown sugar
- ½ tablespoon gochugaru (red pepper flakes)
- 1 ½ tablespoons salt
- ½ tablespoon ground coriander
- ½ tablespoon ground cumin
- 3 cloves of garlic
- 700 grams of pork shoulder
- 1 medium onion, chopped

Instructions

Combine the first seven ingredients. Rub the pork thoroughly with the mixture, making sure to coat it evenly (just enough to cover the pork). Place the chopped onion in the slow cooker first and the pork on top. Cover and place in the fridge overnight, or six to seven hours. In the morning, put the slow cooker on low and let it cook for eight to 10 hours. Carefully remove the pork from the pot and shred with two forks. Reserve the liquid for a sauce or to give the pork more moisture.

I've never been the 'set it and forget it' kind of guy. I've always wanted to be interactive in the kitchen; chopping, stirring, adjusting the temperature, keeping an eye on things. It took a while for me to be okay with the idea of turning on a switch and coming back eight hours later.



About the author: Read Urban, a Virginia native, spent years cooking in the United States before coming to Korea. He enjoys experimenting with Korean ingredients, eating at innovative restaurants in Seoul and creating favorites from home.



Column by Paloma Julian / Photo by Brenda Gottsabend
Find this and other recipes at www.groovekorea.com

Dessert fit for George R. R. Martin


■ I still remember one year ago feeling lost when my friends Sarah and Melissa were talking about the “A Song of Ice and Fire” series (better known as the “Game of Thrones” books). First, they’d talk about the book; second, about the whole saga. The conversation was Latin to me. I couldn’t get anything from it.

They talked about the North, the South, the Narrow Sea; my attention span for it was short, and my annoyance was apparent. Then, they had the idea to start a tradition: every Monday we were going to have dinner and watch HBO’s “Game of Thrones,” the TV series based on the books.

As you can imagine, I wasn’t excited. I knew I was getting thrown into the middle of the story (the series was already in its second season by then). I was going to be lost in the myriad of medieval monikers, frustrated and not understanding anything. To my surprise, I loved it from the first minute. I can’t

tell you how much I have enjoyed those Mondays of good food, friends and King’s Landing.

Then last week, while reading a Spanish newspaper, I found an article talking about the amazing blog “The Inn at the Crossroads.” Its authors, Chelsea Monroe-Cassel and Sariann Lehrer, have decided to record the recipes of the Seven Kingdoms. On their blog you can find recipes for “Root Soup,” “Wildling Cider” and even “Dothraki Blood Pie.” They have a book called “The Feast of Ice and Fire.”

Reading the blog got to me, and I started thinking about what would impress George R. R. Martin. I think he’d like something sweet and not too fussy, something that would fit nicely in his unique world. After brainstorming, I decided to make a dessert with a poetic name: buñuelos de viento (wind fritters, or something like that). 



❧

Buñuelos de Viento (Wind Fritters)

- 200 grams of flour
- 50 grams of butter
- 5 eggs
- ½ liter of milk
- 120 ml of water
- 1 lemon peel
- Sugar
- Cinnamon
- Olive oil
- Salt

❧

Instructions

In a pot, mix the water, milk, lemon peel and a pinch of salt. Start warming it on medium-low heat. When the mixture boils, add the flour and butter, and stir it continuously on low heat. Keep stirring and heating until the dough doesn't get stuck to the walls of the pot. Take it from the heat and let it cool until it's warm. Whisk the eggs and add them carefully to the dough, stirring continuously. When everything is mixed thoroughly, take bits of it with a spoon and drop them into hot olive oil, deep-frying them until they get a nice golden color. Once they are fried, deposit them on kitchen paper to absorb the extra oil. Now you just need to add some sugar, cinnamon, or honey.

— — — — —

On 'The Feast of Wind and Fire' you can find recipes for 'Root Soup,'
'Wildling Cider' and even 'Dothraki Blood Pie.'



About the author: Paloma Julian is Spanish to the core, although she hasn't lived there in years. A woman of many talents, she enjoys bringing the nuances of Spanish food culture to Seoul's English-speaking community.

DINING
OUT

Story and Photos by Kyle Hovanec

True calling

Wine business turns into successful café



Fog City

Fog City International Café
Incheon, Jung-gu, Jungang-dong 1-ga 19-1
(032) 766-9024

To find walking directions from Incheon Station, line 1, visit facebook.com/fogcitycafe or fogcitycafe.com.

"My first attempt was a pathetic little hand-sized loaf. It was pale and dense, but it tasted like sourdough. I knew I must have been on the right track."

— Bob Weimer

■ In 2002, Bob Weimer and his family took a trip to Korea. While traveling, the Weimers noticed a distinct absence of California wine. The ones they did find were of poor quality that didn't match the expensive price tag. They began to ponder the possibilities of importing wine from California and creating a new market.

Ten years later, Weimer and his family live in Korea, and what began as a wine-importing venture has turned into Fog City International Café in Incheon.

The café offers a variety of food inspired by dishes from the San Francisco area. Pizza, roast beef and sandwiches are available along with many traditional bakery items such as cake and brownies. But the most important item on the menu is the sourdough bread, which Weimer has spent years perfecting.

Fog City started as a supplement to the Weimers' wine-importing business. To draw in customers, they began serving food in their tasting room.

"This became very popular," Weimer said. "People loved the atmosphere and the food."

The interior of Fog City is quiet, with a wooden counter and bar made by Weimer. It has indoor and outdoor seating, and soft music is always playing in the background.

Fog City still has a variety of wine to choose from, but the focus has moved to the food, such as the sourdough bread.

"It was the thing I missed the most from back home," Weimer said. "I thought it couldn't be too hard to make so I tried looking up recipes on the internet. My first attempt was a pathetic little hand-sized loaf. It was pale and dense, but it tasted like sourdough. I knew I must have been on the right track."

Baking then became Weimer's daily ritual for three years. He used a variety of techniques, ingredients and methods. His experiments resulted in a variety of bread flavors from fruit and nut to even makgeolli.

In 2011, he finally achieved a loaf to rival the bread he remembered so fondly from back home, and since then the bread has gained a wide fan base.

"I learned that no one can teach another to make naturally leavened bread. No two baking environments or set of equipment and ingredients are exactly alike; therefore one can only use the teachings of others to get a sense of the correct path to follow." ☞

Sweet and sour Jeju mandarins make the winter brighter

We have the luxury of drowning in these citrus jewels throughout winter. The boost of vitamin C they offer the immune system is a bonus.



■ According to the laws of supply and demand, limited availability lends itself to a rising value. In the foreign market, Jeju mandarins are a premium. Living close to the source in Korea, we're lucky to enjoy the fruits without paying the international price.

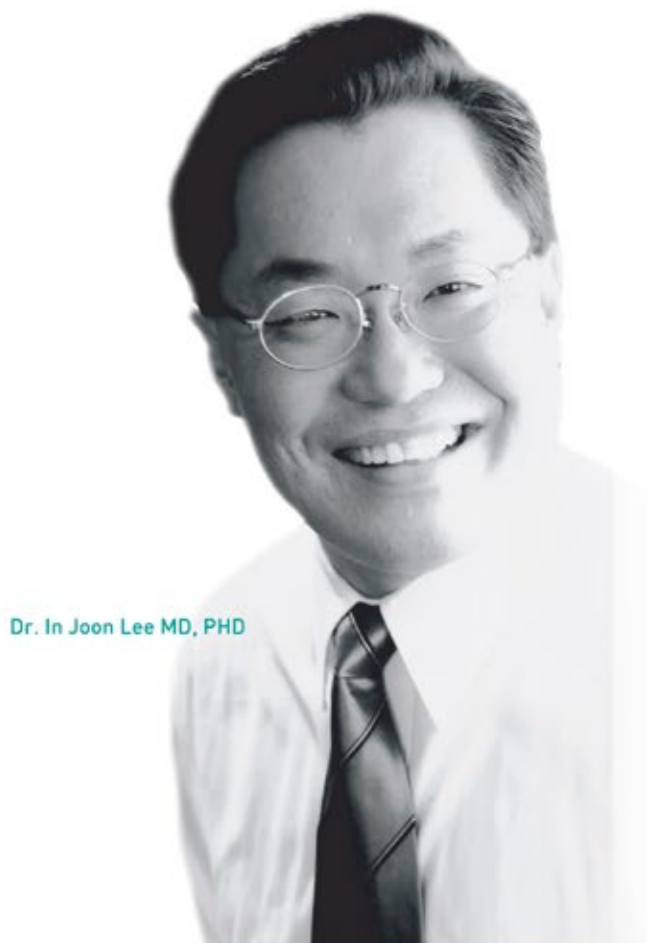
Known to be sweeter than the typical mandarin imported from China, Jeju sets the standard high. Here, we have the luxury of drowning in these citrus jewels throughout the winter. The boost of vitamin C they offer the immune system is a bonus.

Emerging among epicureans as the most desired variety, Jeju mandarins are lumped together with tangerines, clementines and satsumas as members of the orange family. Subcategorized as mandarins, they're distinguished for their thin skin and ease of consumption. The fruit has played a role in oriental medicine for centuries, and is thought to be effective in treating gastrointestinal afflictions, loss of appetite and hardening of the arteries.

Likely present on the island for generations prior, the cultivated variety was introduced to Jeju by a French missionary in the early 1900s. The volcanic soil and ocean breeze lends itself well to the small tree's propagation. Only found in family orchards until the Korean War, following the conflict's resolution the industry bloomed with government support. Many hopped on board the lucrative trend that now rules the island.

Delectable on their own, also try using Jeju mandarin juice to add a tang to your cooking. The juice sets off a soy-ginger stir-fry and adds depth to sauces. If you're more a fan of sweets, try candying the segments or making a marmalade for when your blood sugar dips. 🍊

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Honey Brown

Style: Dark Lager

Colour: Amber with white, billowy head.

Key Ingredients: Blend of pale and caramel malts, as well as honey from Three Hills, and two varieties of hops.

Character: Sweet and honey/molasses flavour, slightly hopped with fuller mouth feel.



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STYLE: Wheat ale.
COLOUR: Golden yellow.
KEY INGREDIENTS: Three types of pale and wheat malts.
CHARACTER: Light on the palate, yet packed with flavour and European hop aroma, with fruity or citrusy notes.



STYLE: Brown ale.
COLOUR: Deep copper with garnet flashes.
KEY INGREDIENTS: Three varieties of hops, and a blend of caramel, pale and black malts.
CHARACTER: Fills your mouth with a fusion of toast malt and sweet caramel up front finishing with a nutty flavour, medium creamy carbonation.



STYLE: Stout.
COLOUR: Black with deep amber hue.
KEY INGREDIENTS: Pale malt with healthy doses of caramel and black malts along with two hops.
CHARACTER: Black malt aroma and flavour with notes of coffee and chocolate and ample hop.



STYLE: Light lime lager.
COLOUR: Soft gold.
KEY INGREDIENTS: Pure malted barley, hops, water and lime.
CHARACTER: Light body with slight lime aroma and flavour.



STYLE: Brown ale.
COLOUR: Warm reddish light brown.
KEY INGREDIENTS: Blend of pale, caramel and black malts and a blend of three hop varieties.
CHARACTER: Malty with a hint of toffee balanced with very evident hop and followed by a clean finish.



STYLE: Dark Lager.
COLOUR: Amber with white, billowy head.
KEY INGREDIENTS: Blend of pale and caramel malts, as well as honey from Three Hills, and two varieties of hops.
CHARACTER: Sweet and honey/molasses flavour, slightly hopped with fuller mouth feel.



STYLE: India Pale Ale.
COLOUR: Golden amber.
KEY INGREDIENTS: British-style hops known as Fuggles. Seriously.
CHARACTER: A classic ale dry hopped to lend a distinctive character. Spicy, warm, earthy.



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BREAKING DOWN BARRIERS TO FIND A VOICE

An exploration of the pioneering band Language of Shapes

Story by Lisa Pollack / Photos by Glen Riley and Chris Evans





"He's just completely wrong. There's nothing right about him." Speaking about the instrument that inspired it all, Tristram Burden, of the Gangneung-based band Language of Shapes, describes the magnetism of what they've dubbed "FrankenMando." A nine-string octave mandolin, likely custom-made, it was unlike anything they'd ever seen.

From his dark corner in the Nakwon Music Arcade, FrankenMando lured Burden into acquiring his presence, and spawned J.E. Seuk and Kimberly Brigner to hop on board by purchasing mandolins as well. With that, what began as a mission for an electric guitar ended as a trio pushing the limits of musical preconceptions.

An instrument typically constrained to bluegrass riffs, the mandolin is a member of the lute family, distantly related to the guitar. Much smaller in size, it has a short neck and metal strings which lend themselves to its trademark high-pitched ring.

Drawn to the instrument for its eerie, arcane sound, Burden explains why it was the mandolin that started it all. "It was just a very natural, organic thing to hear an instrument for the first time and being just absolutely bowled over by its possibilities," he said.

Born from the encounter, at home on the coast in Gangneung, Gangwon Province, Language of Shapes began to take form. For Burden, his muse had spoken and there was no turning back. "There was a real lack of music on the mandolin to listen to and to learn from. There was nothing else to play, so you may as well write your own music." By his side, Seuk and Brigner were eager

pupils. Seuk explained, "He couldn't stop writing new songs, so we learned how to play the mandolin by playing his music."

In the beginning, the band frequented the local open-mic circuit. The trio explored their sound, sifting through a stack of musical arrangements. They settled on a combination reliant on the mandolin, with harmonic vocals by Burden and Seuk and an occasional cameo by the flute. Their sound conjured up the sweeping cinematic strings of great 1960s TV themes and set them apart.

As nothing lasts forever, original member Brigner was forced to move on in the fall of 2011. Left with only two, Burden reveals the thought behind a move to expand their lineup: "There was a real concern about the instrumentation. Just about the auditory perception of it; whether a band really needs that thing in between ... the middle."

Referring to the guitar, the group eventually decided that it didn't, and cast the ensemble mainstay aside. Their eclectic sound was rounded out with Courtland Miles on acoustic bass and Bobby Goldberg on djembe, a traditional African hand drum. Acting to ground the other instruments, Goldberg describes the effect he thinks their accompaniment adds: "If their instruments sat alone, you may not have a way to gauge the distance you're traveling. With Courtland on the bass and me on the djembe, you know where your feet are." In addition, they phased in the bouzouki, a Grecian instrument praised by band members for its drawn-out sound and beast-like growl.

With a solid lineup and the spirit of FrankenMando propelling them forward, the stars aligned for the recording of the band's first album, self-titled, just recently released.

Entirely written and arranged by Burden, the album stays true to the band's roots, and features a shining mandolin presence. Goldberg prai-

"There was a real lack of music on the mandolin to listen to and to learn from. There was nothing else to play, so may as well write your own music."
— Tristram Burden


ses his creative process: "Tristram's relationship with his genius is liquid. They can communicate to one another with impressive consistency."

Exploring existential philosophies that we are more than we appear to be, experiencing more than we are conditioned to interpret, Burden keeps his lyrics relative to the listener. "It's mainly about the different prisons we find ourselves in. And the self-liberation of getting out of them," he said.



Like the theme of many of their lyrics, the band's sound seems to break away from the norm. When listened to, it's hard to confine them to a genre. Completely different from anything already on the scene in Korea, they stand apart with their trademark sound. There are definite folk and psychedelic rock influences, but Seuk says fans aren't sure how to characterize the band: "Everywhere we go, people always say, 'I don't know how to describe you.' Nobody knows and it's really hard for us to say."

For all of them, what's most important is staying true to the voice they've found through their instruments. Bassist Miles sums up the mentality saying, "If you set out to do something once, you're done. You can't do it again."

With that defining theme, the band continues to churn ahead, pumping out new sounds, new vibes, and hopefully defining new boundaries of just what it is that mandolin music sounds like. 

Who is Language of Shapes?

- Tristram Burden (England) — vocals, mandolin, mandola, bouzouki
- J.E. Seuk (U.S.) — vocals, mandolin, mandola, flute
- Courtland Miles (U.S.) — bass
- Bobby Goldberg (U.S.) — djembe
- Kimberly Brigner (U.S.) — mandolin, flute and founding member, since departed

Language of Shapes online

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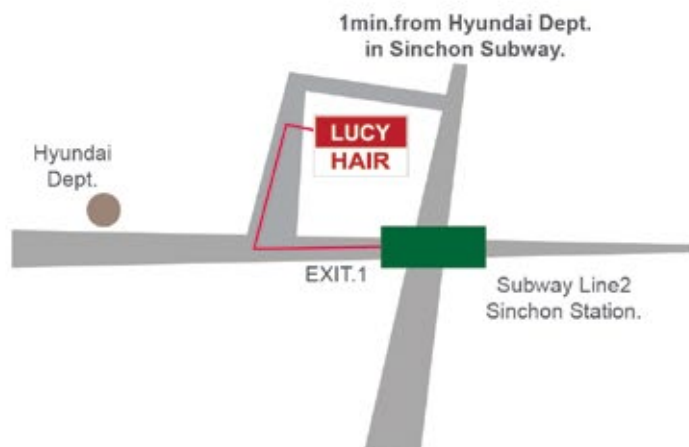
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Interview

LYMBYC SYSTYM

Rising indie stars to perform Jan. 10-12

Interview by Alice Rhee / Photos courtesy Lymbyc Systym



■ It seems fitting that brothers Michael and Jared Bell named their band after a set of brain structures that control emotion and memory. Lymbyc Systym's sonic landscapes seem to be lifted from lucid dreams, and their incredible long-distance collaborative process has the rhythm of firing synapses.

Lymbyc Systym is bringing their synesthetic orchestration of analog and digital sounds to Korea from Jan. 10 to 12 in support of their new album "Symbolyst."

Groove Korea got to pick Michael Bell's brain for the secrets behind the duo's magnetic creativity.

Groove Korea: What's the earliest memory you have of collaborating with your brother artistically?

Michael Bell: I remember my brother and I working on drawings together when we were super, super young. As far as music, we had a kiddie rap, hip-hop group with our neighbor when I was 11 or 12 and Jared was 9.

Tell us a little more about your long-distance collaborative process.

We have honed our process of making albums without being together in the same room, city or even country over the last few years. It is a process of exchanging ideas back and forth over the internet. Usually Jared's ideas begin with a melody and mine with a beat, but it can go the other way, too!

Then we will build on each other's ideas, and re-exchange until something near a song is finished. Then usually we get together to record more tracks, or work on rough mixes.

How long does it take for a song to be completed this way?

Usually it takes a long time — over a year.

Is it important to feel as though you are on the same page in terms of what inspires a specific song — whether that is an emotion or another artist's work?

Since we are brothers and share blood, and also have somewhat similar tastes, especially when it comes to music, we are generally always already on the same page with our music writing or band business concepts. We don't ever discuss what inspires a song — we just let how the ideas sound dictate what happens. Often I know where Jared is going with a melodic motif without having to ask.

But also, while sharing similar tastes in music or art, our personalities are actually quite different. I think we have a good yin/yang relationship personality-wise in regards to our band.

In instances where songs were created long-distance, what's the experience of rehearsing that music together for the first time like?

It is an amazing feeling to get together and try to play a new song for the first time. Before we toured Asia in 2011, when we were writing and recording "Symbolyst," we got together to figure out how we were going to play those songs live for our tour coming up.

It's crazy how fluidly it worked out at that first rehearsal! Everything just gelled, and that's usually just what happens with our band. It's great being just a two-piece when rehearsing new material.

With only two people in your band, how do you recreate your complex sounds when performing live?

We incorporate a computer to play back elements of the music that were created on a computer, such as electronic percussion or digitally manipulated texture. Additionally, we have some instrumental textures from the record playing back to help flesh out the sound.

"I loved living in Japan. It's been my only opportunity to live in a culture besides my own for some time. I was able to DJ quite a bit in Shibuya, Tokyo, which turned me on to what people were really listening to there at the time."

— Michael Bell

How did living in Asia influence your music and creativity?

I loved living in Japan. It's been my only opportunity to live in a culture besides my own for some time. I was able to DJ quite a bit in Shibuya, Tokyo, which turned me on to what people were really listening to there at the time. Tokyo has so many teeny, tiny niche little places that might be on the 10th floor of some building, so there is plenty of opportunity to go out and experience whatever type of music you are really into, no matter how strange it may be.

Who would be your dream collaborator? I saw that your music has been featured in a few documentaries. Is film scoring something you've ever considered?

We have always wanted to score a feature-length film; it would be challenging and rewarding. As far as a dream film collaborator, mine would be Sofia Coppola.

Any advice for aspiring musicians or artists?

Definitely the idea that doing music for fun is the most important reason to do it has always rung true to me. No matter how cliché it may sound, you can't ever let your hopes reside on making money from your art, your music. Make albums for the love of it! Your best work only happens when you love what you are doing. 🎧

Tour schedule and ticket info

Lymbyc Systym

Jan. 10 (Thursday)
Daegu Urban
advance 10,000 / door 15,000

Jan. 11 (Friday)
Busan Almost Famous
advance 10,000 / door 15,000

Jan. 12 (Saturday)
Seoul Salon Badabie
advance 15,000 / door 20,000

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Hello, my name is Annyong

An interview with
Justin Lee from 'Arrested Development'

Interview by Ben Landau

■ Justin Lee is a man of many titles. He is an actor, producer, entrepreneur and undefeated mixed martial artist. Most know him simply as Annyong, the adopted Korean son of Lucille and George Sr. from Fox's beloved ex-sit-com "Arrested Development." The show, which centers around the Bluths — a formerly wealthy, routinely dysfunctional family with legal problems — is widely recognized as one of the defining comedies of "the aughts." Although it suffered from low ratings in each of its three original seasons, the multiple-E Emmy-winning riches to rags story won much critical praise for its dense, pun-based comedy — so much, in fact, that in 2011 the prominent entertainment website, IGN, named it the funniest show of all time. This is in part thanks to Lee's character, Annyong Bluth (a name given to him after his initial greeting is mistaken as an introduction). With his dead eyes and iconic bowl cut, he was the catalyst for some of the show's most memorable humor. Now, nearly seven years after it was canceled, "Arrested Development" is gearing up for its 2013 return to the small screen. Groove Korea sat down with Justin Lee for a Skype chat on his 23rd birthday to talk about his new web series "One Warm Night," his Korean roots, his passion for mixed martial arts and working on the set of "Arrested Development."

"One of my biggest motivations is to leave a positive impact behind, to leave a legacy; and if that's through Annyong Bluth, then I appreciate everything that it's helped me do."
— Justin Lee

Groove Korea: Tell us about your current project, "One Warm Night."

Justin Lee: "One Warm Night" is a nine-episode series produced by The Actors Room in association with Last Chance Productions. It's an absolutely amazing, amazing series — unique, crazy, quirky. It has a ton of mystery, very suspenseful. It's filled with a lot of misfits, oddballs. You got the ninjas, some FBI here and there, it's a really crazy ride. We (the cast) are all from The Actors Room, which is a world-renowned acting school coached by Steven T. Lowe. It's like a very big family there and everyone is expected to work at this very high level of professionalism. It's a ton of fun.

What is Black Canvas?

Black Canvas is a production company that my business partner, Ryan Sang, and I started a little over a year ago. We're working directly with Last Chance Productions — we kind of like to call them our parent company. Steve Lowe, like I said, he's my manager, but he's also a great mentor of mine, a really great friend. I've just been really learning a lot under him. This experience with "One Warm Night," and of really getting hands-on — not just on the acting side, but on the production side as well — (we're) really understanding what it's like to manage a production, what it's like to produce, and my partner Ryan and I are the production managers on the show.

Any dream projects moving ahead?

Well I'd love to do an MMA (mixed martial arts) movie, now that it's becoming a little more popular. But, I want to do one that isn't so cheesy or low concept. Hopefully that role comes around. Like I said, acting has always been a passion of mine, but I love MMA as well. I've been competing in martial arts for a little over 18 years now, so I'd love to intertwine the two and try to find a way to make the two correlate.

Any plans to fight professionally?

I've been offered professional fights before. But, as of now, my main focus is acting, as well as production, and it just takes so much time. To be able to fight professionally, that's a full-time job. You have to really commit your diet, your lifestyle, and right now, I can't really give it the commitment that a professional career, just like any professional career, would deserve. But I'll tell you what, I always thought a show like celebrity mixed martial arts, or something like that, would be extremely interesting. I think a lot of celebrities would be interested in that as well. Maybe add some charity component. It would be great.

Tell us about the casting process you went through for "Arrested Development."

The role of Annyong was actually for an 18-year-old. I went to the first audition and they wanted me to go to a callback. The same day they asked me to go to another audition over at Culver Studios. When I went into that audition room, the producers were there, Mitch Hurwitz was in there. And I had no idea who Mitch Hurwitz was at the time. I was very, very young. So I think that might have been a good thing. I didn't quite understand the caliber of what I was getting myself into. I just knew that I was doing something that I love. Just followed my heart and had a good time with it. And on the drive home I got a call that I had booked the job for Annyong Bluth.

It must have been crazy on set.

Oh, absolutely. Everyone is amazing, both professionally and personally. I mean, to work with them (the cast and crew) was an absolute blessing. All of them.

Now, we know you were more of a supporting character, but how does it feel knowing that you played one of the most iconic Korean characters in American TV history?

Oh, man (laughs) ... I keep getting that from people, but it feels good. One of my biggest motivations is to leave a positive impact behind, to leave a legacy; and if that's through Annyong Bluth, then I appreciate everything that it's helped me do.

So tell us about the new season. Is it actually going to happen?

I can't say too much. As always, everything is very hush-hush, but season four is in development. They are working on it and yeah, like I said, I'm very excited for all the cast members, because they definitely deserve it. This was, and still is, an amazing, amazing show. It was just so ahead of its time.

Did your parents grow up in Korea?

Yes, born in Korea, for the most part raised in Korea. My dad moved here (California) when he was in his early 20s, my mom when she was 16.

What role does your Korean background play in your life?

A huge role. I grew up in Mission Viejo, so it's a pretty predominantly Caucasian neighborhood, especially when I was growing up there 10 years ago, and man, it can get confusing with two different cultures mixing together and trying to figure out what's right or what's wrong. It can get very confusing. But the thing I do appreciate is that I can see the positives and negatives on both sides. When I decide to raise my own kids, I can choose to pick the parts that I love about Korean culture and the parts I love about American culture. So, I think it was a blessing to experience all that.

So what are some of those parts you love about Korean culture?

Well, I love the food (laughs), and I generally love the work ethic. I have a lot of pride in the work ethic of Koreans. I look at my whole family, and what they had to do as immigrants not knowing the language to make it. My grandpa, when he first came out here, he started out with nothing, barely any change in his pocket. Brought his five kids over here. Was washing windows. He even wrestled for money. Eventually he made his way to owning his own liquor store. It's his struggle that pushes me.

Have you ever been to Korea?

Yeah, I love Korea! I actually just went last year. My girlfriend (Amanda Rice) is an international model and she was out there for a couple of months, so I went out to visit her last October. It was a ton of fun. The last time I went was almost 10 years before that, so a lot had changed. The economy has taken off. I have to say, I'm extremely impressed with their subway system.

Any dreams of crossing over into the Korean market someday?

I always try to be open-minded about everything. I would love to integrate Korean and American culture a lot more. Korea is huge on entertainment. It's their money-maker. Look at Psy with "Gangnam Style." I'd love to work with him.

What was your favorite memory working on set?

One of my most memorable moments shooting "Arrested Development" was working alongside Tony Hale. Tony and I always had the funniest scenes together, where we would be wrestling and fighting with each other, always a blast to shoot. In one of the episodes Buster and I run into some sibling rivalry, so you see Buster kinda throw me around, and you get to see me kind of do a double-leg-blast takedown on Buster.

In between takes, makeup and wardrobe had to constantly come in and fix us up. That same day, I also got to do my own stunt, which was really exciting. For one of the shots I come out of nowhere and ambush Buster. It looks like I was a ninja hanging on the ceiling because when Tony walks through the doorway, I drop from the sky/ceiling and tackle him from above. We had a pretty tall ladder, so I went to the top of the ladder and when Buster came walking through the door I had to jump off the ladder and bonsai onto him (laughs).

It was a ton of fun, came out really well, and I'm just glad that Tony is a sturdy guy, 'cause that could've ended ugly! 🍻



"When I went into that audition room, the producers were there, Mitch Hurwitz was in there. And I had no idea who Mitch Hurwitz was at the time. I was very, very young. So I think that might have been a good thing. I didn't quite understand the caliber of what I was getting myself into. I just knew that I was doing something that I love." — Justin Lee





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Groove Korea is teaming up with Artist's Journey to bring you insight into Korea's art community.

INTERVIEW WITH KEVIN LAMBERT, DIRECTOR OF

'THE VIEW FROM HERE'

Interview by Wilfred Lee / Stills from 'The View from Here'

■ Director Kevin Lambert is a prolific player in Seoul's expat film community. His repertoire includes documentary, narrative and commercial productions, and he is currently in the process of polishing up his feature-length film, "The View from Here." Lambert sat down with Artist's Journey's Wilfred Lee to talk about film in Korea, and to give us a glimpse into the making of "The View from Here."

Groove Korea: What was the inception of the idea behind "The View from Here"?

Kevin Lambert: We went out to this pension with our friends, and I'm standing on this balcony on the coast of Incheon, looking over all this space and water and thinking, what would happen if someone just walked all the way out there? And I envisioned this story, because there is this little island out there and I saw all this water and mud. The story is about a couple who go out to a pension to salvage their relationship, to have a watery vacation, lie on the beach and have a good time, and when they look out at the water, all they see is mud, all mud.

You originally intended for the film to be a short. How did it become a feature-length film?

I wrote the feature screenplay first, so it was originally supposed to be a feature. We had already scheduled to shoot a short in the summer, and then a feature in the winter. Well, the short became the feature. We were always rehearsing for the feature, and then cutting the script down to twelve minutes. When we were shooting it we thought, well, we'll clip what we need out of the feature, but then we see all this great material that we didn't want to take out, and we were like, let's keep it.





The film was shot here in Korea, though you're not from Korea. How do you think that affects the story?

Ultimately, the most important thing about this film is not necessarily that it was shot in Korea. Korea's starting to be more on the world's radar, so it would be nice for people to notice that there are already communities of Westerners over here doing their thing. But it's not just about being here; it's a story about two people, that no matter where you go, you still can't escape you. And in the end, Korea makes a very nice backdrop, because it's also a story of alienation, isolation, and I think we get that a lot here, and that becomes a theme, too, being on the outside. Being a tourist, if you will.

How did you first get into filmmaking? Was there a moment when you thought, "That is what I want to do"?

I started writing stories in second grade. We were given an assignment and I made it my point to write a story with everyone in my class in it. I had (my best friend Buck) exploding into hot dogs, and the girl I liked, there she is with lice jumping off her hair, and every kid in my class featured in my story. I came to school and read my story to the class, and everybody was just a little shocked. The teacher's assignment that day was that everyone was required to write a story about yourself. I guess she was a little offended. She was like, "Yeah! That'll teach him." It did! It taught me the power of the word. Ever since then, I've wanted to be a writer.

Where do you see the expat film community in Seoul heading?

I see a lot of the filmmakers coming out of this community being very productive in their own right because the learning curve is exponentially faster. I see everybody getting there a whole lot faster than they would back home, especially if they were looking for a job or stuck living at their parents' house. 🍷



"But it's not just about being here; it's a story about two people, that no matter where you go, you still can't escape you."

—Kevin Lambert

Info

To learn more about Kevin Lambert's independent film, "The View from Here," visit www.facebook.com/itsallmudoutthere

Artist's Journey's Wilfred Lee and Alison Hjelseth bring you daily doses of inspiration, including weekly podcasts featuring artists from around the globe. Learn more at www.facebook.com/myartistsjourney or www.artistsjourney.org.

At the box office

The big screen

By Dean Crawford

Cloud Atlas

Directed by Lana Wachowski, Andy Wachowski and Tom Tykwer



Jan. **10** Sci-fi/Drama
172 minutes

■ One of the best books I have read in a long time is David Mitchell's "Cloud Atlas." It's a novel of epic proportions, consisting of six interwoven stories spanning several centuries that show how one simple act, akin to one drop of water in an ocean, can cause a tidal wave of change over time across the world. It really is a fascinating yet, at times, difficult book. Its structure forces you to stick with it right until the end if you want to make sense of each chapter.

I imagined that a film adaptation of such a book would be extremely difficult. On one hand, the novel's structure has an art house sensibility to it, as the narrative is all over the place and your mind has to constantly work out the connections between each character. Because of the size and scope of the story, however, it seemed like a very large budget would be needed to make it into a film. Sadly, "art house" and "big budget" are two concepts that rarely work well together.

Three parties who were determined to make the project happen were Tom Tykwer, director of the excellent "Run Lola Run," and the Wachowski siblings of "The Matrix" fame. With independent financial backing from several German companies, the three went about filming one of the most ambitious film projects of all time. Not only were there three directors shooting two units simultaneously,

P R E V I E W

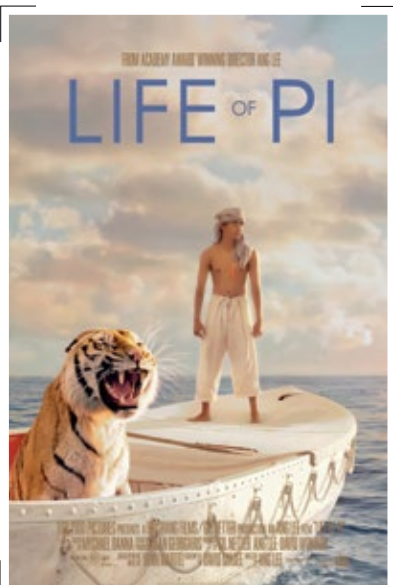
but the actors all play several different roles and moved from one unit to the next on a daily basis.

As for the story, it is difficult to say what the film is about. It's the tale of a man travelling the seas in the mid-19th century, and yet it's the story of a young composer in the early 20th century trying to find true love. At some points, it's a murder mystery set in 1970s America, but then reverts to a comedy set in present-day England. It's also the tale of a Korean robot rebellion in the future and explores how humanity survives in post-apocalyptic America. The film stars Tom Hanks, Halle Berry, Hugh Grant, Hugo Weaving and Jim Broadbent, among others.

As you can tell, the plot seems a little convoluted, and it is. I fear this might be the reason for its disappointing performance at the U.S. box office. As previously mentioned, art house sensibilities and box-office success don't usually go hand-in-hand. But from the extended trailers, it looks as if the directors have stayed fairly true to the book, which is great. Having actors play multiple roles is a very unsavory nod to the central theme of reincarnation, but I can live with that. I genuinely hope its international box office numbers pick up, because an independent film of this magnitude really deserves to be seen, lest it never happens again.

Life of Pi

Directed by Ang Lee



Jan. **3** Adventure/Drama
127 minutes

■ The theme for Korea's tent pole releases in January appears to be literary adaptations. Not only is David Mitchell's "Cloud Atlas" finally getting released, but so is Ang Lee's cinematic adaptation of Yann Martel's fantasy adventure novel "Life of Pi."

The film has taken many years to reach the big screen, which is not surprising considering the author described the novel as "unfilmable" while he was writing it.

It should be noted, however, that the initial problems with the project were not related to the difficulty of portraying Martel's vision onscreen; instead, they had more to do with keeping one director long enough to film the whole thing.


Martel's novel won the Man Booker Prize in 2002, and the film rights were subsequently snapped up in 2003 by Fox 2000 Pictures. Initially, M. Night Shyamalan was set to direct, and even got so far into the production that he rewrote some of the script, but he eventually departed to direct "Lady in the Water." More fool him.

"Y Tu Mamá También" director Alfonso Cuarón was next in line to helm the project, but thankfully left to direct the stunning "Children of Men." Fox 2000 thought it had sealed the deal when the visionary director of "Amélie" and "Micmacs," Jean-Pierre Jeunet, rewrote the screenplay (again) and was supposed to start filming in 2006.

P R E V I E W

Unfortunately, Jeunet also left the project, which again put the film in limbo.

With so many bail-outs, the film seemed like a poisoned chalice. With delays of over six years and three different directors passing, who would want to direct the film now? It turned out that the Oscar-winning director of "Brokeback Mountain," Ang Lee, did, and the film finally went into production in October 2010 with unknown actor Suraj Sharma cast in the lead role as Pi. Sharma was a student at the time and only attended the open auditions to keep his brother company, but ended up landing the role of a lifetime.

"Life of Pi" tells the story of a teenager who is forced to spend 227 days in a boat with a ferocious Bengal tiger after his family's ship is capsized en route to Canada. The Guardian called the film "astonishing," and bloggers have been raving about its use of 3-D footage. Much like Martin Scorsese's "Hugo," it just goes to show that, in the correct hands, 3-D can be a force for good. I never got past the first chapter of Martel's novel (apologies to those who love it), so I am looking forward to catching this long-awaited film adaptation. 

Korean DVD Corner

The small screen

By Dean Crawford

Doomsday Book

Directed by Kim Ji-woon, Yim Pil-seong

Rated
15 Sci-fi anthology
113 minutes

R E V I E W



One film I was looking forward to catching on DVD was the science-fiction apocalyptic-thriller "Doomsday Book," directed by Kim Ji-woon and Yim Pil-seong. The winner of the Cheval Noir Award for best film during last year's Fantasia International Film Festival in Canada, not only did it look like a sci-fi existentialist journey, but Kim Ji-woon is the acclaimed director of "A Tale of Two Sisters" and "I Saw The Devil." Needless to say, I was pretty excited to finally see this.

"Doomsday Book" is split into three different stories, the first being "Brave New World," which focuses on research scientist Seok-woo. His family has gone on holiday without him and the horror ensues because he has to take out the trash while they are gone. One piece of the rubbish in the pile is a toxic rotten apple that finds its way into feed for cows, thus infecting the animals, which in turn infects the humans who eat the cows, which in turn transforms them into flesh-eating zombies.

The second story, "Heavenly Creatures," is set in a world where automotons are a regular part of daily life, from pet robot dogs to RU4 androids that are employed as cleaners. A young technician is called out to a Buddhist monastery to investigate whether their particular RU4 android is faulty, or if it has indeed achieved enlightenment like it claims.

The end of the world is nigh in the final story, "Happy Birthday," after Min-seo loses her father's beloved eight-ball and orders a replacement online. Several years later, the 8-ball is being delivered, but it's the size of a small country and is on a collision course with Earth.

It came as a bit of a surprise to see the film was separated into three totally unrelated sections, because most of the marketing material, including the bulk of the trailer and all the posters, focused on "Heavenly Creatures." But it is clear to see why, as it was by far the strongest segment. It really was a thought-provoking piece about what it means to be human and how tough it is when one is forced to question one's own faith.

Seeing as there is no direct relationship between the segments, the first and final stories come across as public service announcements warning against the evils of not recycling your rubbish or making sure we tell the truth. If the two stories had had the same serious tone as "Heavenly Creatures," I might have enjoyed them more. And with nothing to tie the narratives together, the film feels devoid of any real purpose or message. Obviously the jury at the Fantasia International Film Festival disagrees, but after hearing about the awards the film won and waiting for such a long time to see it, I was left feeling a little disappointed.

Hansel and Gretel

Directed by Yim Pil-seong

Rated
12 Horror
116 minutes

R E V I E W



After recently watching "Doomsday Book," I was in the mood for another Yim Pil-seong film and realized I hadn't yet seen his acclaimed "Hansel and Gretel." It won several awards at genre film festivals and has been widely praised for its inventive style.

The film begins as Eun-soo is driving along the highway to visit his sick mother, when he receives a call from his girlfriend telling him that she is pregnant. As they are trying to decide what to do about the baby, Eun-soo veers off the road, crashing his car. He is found by Yeong-hee, who takes him deep into the woods to the house where she lives with her brother, younger sister and seemingly agitated parents.


It's a wondrous, colorful place where dreams seem to come true. But so do nightmares, as Eun-soo realizes that he is trapped in a maze of forests, and suspects that it may be the son, Man-bok, who is controlling it all. Desperate to leave so he can visit his mother and girlfriend, Eun-soo tries to get to the bottom of this strange fairy tale gone wrong.

For the first two-thirds of the film, you think you are simply watching a quirky Korean mash-up of a Hans Christian Anderson fairy tale blended with "Children of the Corn." It's colorful, interesting and nice to look at, but not that scary. But then the film takes a really, really dark

turn and the first hour starts to make more sense as you realize the significance of the "Hansel and Gretel" fairy tale. It was amazing to see how the mood of the film could switch in a split second, but still keep you engrossed in the narrative.

A special mention needs to be given to the children in the film. Very rarely am I impressed by child actors ("Looper" is the most recent occasion I can think of), but you should remember the names Eun Won-jae, Sim Eun-kyung and Jin Ji-hee as they were brilliant, particularly the girls. Jin, the youngest of the three, is a little star in the making.

She gives a performance so full of sass that you're actually a little afraid of her at times.

"Hansel and Gretel" is a visual treat, with cinematographer Kim Ji-yeong seemingly using every available color in his palette to give this fairytale world a life of its own. While it might not be totally original, it was certainly a welcome change from the generic paint-by-numbers Korean horror films I have seen recently, and it is highly recommended. 

Economic depravity with no hope for escape

Expat director brings 'Good People' to Seoul

Story by Anna Sebel / Photo by Michele Farley

Info

"Good People" runs Jan. 25-27 at White Box Theatre.

Tickets

For bookings and more information, go to www.probatorytheatre.com.

■ Director Stephen Glaspie is not afraid of controversy. Last June, his sold-out production of the Pulitzer Prize-winning "Red Light Winter" had Seoul talking, and for all the right reasons. Glaspie premiered the explicit show to what is considered to be Seoul's largely conservative demographic of theatergoers, with resoundingly positive feedback. "We took a risk and it paid off," he said of the show afterwards.

Now, the Ball State University theater major is returning to White Box Theatre to lend his hand to yet another contemporary tale of longing, the Tony-nominated "Good People" by Pulitzer-winning playwright David Lindsay-Abaire.

Glaspie warns that people expecting a show similar to his directorial debut may be surprised at the contrasting material he has chosen. The show will contain none of the explicit content, exotic locations or attractive 20-somethings that were a part of his first production. It could easily be described as one of the least glamorous shows to receive a run on Broadway.

"This show is nothing like 'Red Light Winter.' The premise and characters are completely different,"

"I have never been to Amsterdam or slept with a prostitute, but that didn't keep 'Red Light Winter' from being an authentic experience for the audience."

— Stephen Glaspie, director

Glaspie said. "However, they are both brilliant stories with messages that are so universal, anyone can relate."

The new play, "Good People," tells the story of Margie — a 50-year-old high school dropout trying to make ends meet after being dismissed from her minimum wage job at a dollar store.

She and the other main characters are all nearly twice Glaspie's 26 years, but the young expat was quick to dismiss concerns about his ability to relate to the story.


"When I read a new play, I focus on the story and the journey of the characters. I don't become obsessed with details like age," Glaspie said.

"It is not about being the same as the characters in the play you're directing. It's about wanting to create something that tells their story in the best way possible. I have never been to Amsterdam or slept with a prostitute, but that didn't keep 'Red Light Winter' from being an authentic experience for the audience."

In fact, Glaspie was praised for his delicate maturity in handling the tough material in that show, which contained nudity, sex and drug use.

When considering a script, he has a simple philosophy: "I tell stories, whether on or off stage."

"'Good People' is a story I know I can tell well. I grew up in a small town in Indiana. My family struggled for a long time to keep bills paid and food on the table. I understand what the lead, Margie, is going through."

Desiree Munro, the Australian-born creative director of Probationary Theatre, is confident the play, which is set in Boston's working-class Southie neighborhood, will be enjoyed by all, no matter their background. "I could easily connect to this script, and I know I'm not alone," she said. "You don't have to be from the States." 



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"Our organization is different from others because we want to continue to build a relationship with the charity organizations and provide opportunities to raise money for them again. Our goal is to improve every show we do, make it bigger and better."

— Emma Kalka

Music makes the event

Clash brings indie and hip-hop together to raise money for charity

Story by Jamie Keener / Photos by Brian Thompson

■ A small idea turned into a big success when Emma Kalka teamed up with Hannah Kamau in the hopes of melding music and charity to raise awareness about social issues.

Kalka is now the lead organizer of Clash, a regular concert with the slogan "Two worlds collide for the greater good." The goal is to raise money for various causes and bring the expat and Korean communities together.

Held every three months, the event features music by a variety of local Korean and expat hip-hop and indie rock bands, including Young Blood, The Guten Birds, DA Green featuring 20 minutes, Saul Goode and Dongmyo Police Box.

The first concert raised funds for the Korean Unwed Mothers' Families Association, which advocates for the rights of single unwed mothers and their children.

"We talked about doing a small charity event for Valentine's Day to raise money for KUMFA, and that led us to the idea of a charity concert," Kalka said.

Kamau has since left Korea, but it was her love for music that helped provide the inspiration for the event. While Kalka had spent most of her first three years here in Hongdae listening to Korean indie bands, Kamau was really into R&B and hip-hop. They wanted to bring together the two music genres they loved so much, and the concept for the charity concert evolved.

"Because I wanted to do something for charity and Hannah loved the idea of introducing the two styles of music, that was really how Clash was born," Kalka said.

Neither of the two had experience putting together a concert, so Kamau brought on Jeremy Rondell, who has connections to the hip-hop and expat communities here in Korea and beyond, to help them produce the first event. Rondell, also known as JC, is the CEO of Iconz Media, a promotional and IT company based in Korea with locations in Japan and

elsewhere in Asia. The event was a huge success, bringing in around 250 people and raising almost 2 million won for the organization.

The success of the event prompted the organizers to keep it going.

"We want to provide a way for expats and Koreans to connect socially as well learn about social issues together."

— Emma Kalka

"We want to provide a way for expats and Koreans to connect socially as well learn about social issues together," Kalka said. "Our organization is different from others because we want to continue to build a relationship with the charity organizations and provide opportunities to raise money for them again. Our goal is to improve every show we do, make it bigger and better."

The second event, Clash 2.0, raised money for The Butterfly Fund, which was created by two survivors of Japanese military sexual slavery, Kim-Bok-dong, 86, and Gil Won-ok, 84, in coordination with the Korean Council for Women Drafted into Military Sexual Slavery by Japan. The fund raises money to aid a shelter in the Congo that helps women and children who are victims of war.

The next event, Clash 3.0, was done for Angel House, a community of disabled people ranging in age from 1 to 70 that was founded by Jang Soon-ok in 1993. Jang grew up as a virtual orphan after being abandoned because she was disabled.

In addition to being a beneficiary of the Clash event, Angel House has also provided volunteers to help with event planning and promotion to the Korean community, with which the organizers are keen to

build stronger relationships.

"We really can't promote to the expats and bring in more than we already have, (and) there's a larger scope of Koreans to pull from, so we can make it truly global and multicultural," Kalka said. "We need more sponsors, and we want people who are interested in helping spread awareness."

All the events have been held at Club Freebird in Hongdae, which has been an avid supporter of Clash and plans to keep working with the organizers on their upcoming events. The Clash event this month will raise money for Justice for North Korea, which helps North Korean refugees in South Korea and other countries and also funds shelters in China. In South Korea, the organization offers tutoring programs for defectors and does street campaigns to raise awareness about the defectors' plight. 🇰🇷

Clash 4.0

Date: Jan. 26

Time: 7 p.m. to midnight

Place: Club Freebird in Hongdae, Hongik University Station, line 2, exit 6.

See a map at www.clubfreebird.com.
Admission: 10,000 won in advance or 15,000 won at the door

Want to be involved as a performer, volunteer, organizer or sponsor?

Contact Emma Kalka (e_kalka@hotmail.com) or Jeremy Rondell (jsizzle1981@gmail.com).

For more information about upcoming events, visit their Facebook page or email clash.twoworlds@gmail.com.

COMMUNITY

Edited by Jenny Na / jenny@groovekorea.com



STRETCH YOUR POTENTIAL

The Denver Broncos do yoga, so why don't you?

Story by Khaled Allen

Body & Seoul Martial Arts and Fitness Center

■ The New York Giants and Denver Broncos both do yoga, but in case you think football is a soft sport, know that the Toronto Maple Leafs practice it as well. Playoff performance aside, each team houses some pretty hard-core athletes. That being said, I know how hard it can be to imagine that deep breathing and awkward stretches are legitimate ways to improve your performance.

I was among the hardest of the hard-core, and I thought I didn't need yoga. After all, I could rip over 300 pounds off the floor and then chum out a few dozen pull-ups. How was downward dog going to improve on that?

After I injured my back, there wasn't much besides yoga that I could do. I turned to yoga with the hope that some gentle exercise would give me back the ability to get dressed in the morning without crippling agony. After a few weeks, I noticed I wasn't as stiff in the mornings as I had been, so even after my back healed, I kept it up.

Then I returned to my gym for an intense workout. I expected to find myself a bit behind, having done nothing for the last month, but to my surprise, I was even faster and more powerful than before. Prior to the injury, my movements had been powerful but brutish. Now, I was precise and efficient. I wasn't fighting my own inflexibility, so my muscles could direct all of their energy toward moving the weights, and being more mobile made it less tiring to get into the proper positions. I was amazed at how much smoother the whole workout felt.

Relax into strength

If your sport relies on fast, coordinated movements — as most martial arts and team sports do — being able to relax muscles at the right time can make the difference between victory and defeat. When you aren't fighting your own stiff muscles, you can drive all of your power into smashing your opponent, spiking the ball or chasing down whoever just nabbed your boyfriend's wallet.

There are three reasons why learning to relax can make you more powerful.

First, strength comes from muscular tension, but in order for a muscle to contract, it must first be stretched. The deeper the initial stretch, the stronger the contraction will be. Think of a rubber band. If it is stretched to its full length and then released, it snaps much more powerfully than if it is only stretched a little bit. If something prevents the rubber band from stretching fully, it'll never generate its full power. In the same way, if your body normally limits how much your muscles can stretch, they'll never generate their full power. The flexibility work in yoga will train your brain to allow for deeper stretches.

Second, tense muscles move more slowly. What makes martial artists so fast is their ability to relax until the moment they need to tense for a punch. Holding unnecessary tension slows the body down by stiffening joints. Relaxed muscles let you move fluidly and rapidly. The same principles apply to sprinting, jumping and any other quick movement. Yoga teaches you how to turn tension on and off at the right time, and with the right rhythm.

Third, muscles work in pairs. If one side of the pair is too tight, it prevents the other side from working properly. The working muscle will have to overcome the force of its tight partner in addition to any weight it is trying to move. In order to hold the poses in yoga, you will learn how to totally relax some muscles to get the most out of the ones holding the pose.

So, regardless of whether your goal is strength, speed or power, there are a lot of benefits to being able to relax.

More to it than stretches

Most people know that improving their flexibility can help alleviate aches and pains that accumulate as a result of sedentary living. Yoga is usually understood as something that helps people find peace with stiff bodies. But while it is well known for its benefits for flexibility and mobility, it is about much more than simply stretching. Yoga, as a practice, trains the mind and body to relax muscles at the right times, rather than making them hold constant tension. The mindfulness you practice in yoga translates to more precise movement, even when you don't have the luxury of being fully present. It develops fine-tuned, whole-body coordination that enables you to get the most out of your body and perform in sports and life.

4 places to do yoga in Seoul

Body & Seoul Martial Arts and Fitness Center

Where: Itaewon

Phone: (02) 749-2485, 010-6397-2662

Online: www.seoulmartialarts.com

Magic Pond Yoga

Where: Yeouido

Phone: (02) 782-1003, 010-3689-1799

Online: www.magicpond.co.kr

Drishti Yoga

Where: Hongdae

Phone: (02) 319-5655

Online: www.yogadrishti.co.kr

Celebrity Yoga

Where: Gangnam

Phone: (02) 2052-0096

Online: www.yoga-palace.com


KIKIN' IT

The woman behind
Korea's Monday
morning chuckles

Blog profile:

kikinitinkorea.tumblr.com

Story and Photos by
James Little



"I freaked out.
I thought, what if
people think that
I'm crazy?"

Who is Krystle?

Groove Korea caught up with Krystle — the founder of the popular blog KikinitinKorea — on her last night in Korea.

"I think it's silly to put my name on something that's not mine. It's kind of a group thing." — Krystle

■ Some blogs are good, but most are not. So it is surprising when one comes along that captures an audience. Just when it felt like nothing could surprise you from a Korean expat blog, along came KikinitinKorea and the witty Californian behind it.

For those who haven't yet been bombarded with links to her blog from friends, the premise is very simple. A single line is written describing a typical eye-opening moment about living in Korea, which is followed by a reaction in the form of an animated image from a TV show or movie. A basic concept perhaps, but one that works brilliantly. KikinitinKorea's ability to humorously capture what all foreigners in Korea have experienced has been the key to its success.

"A girlfriend back home had sent me the blog WhatShouldWeCallMe (whatshouldwecallme.tumblr.com) and I think that's where all this .gif (animated image) mania has spread. You see, if you ever go on Tumblr, everybody and their mom has their own version of WhatShouldWeCallMe," said Krystle, the site's operator, who asked Groove Korea to not publish her surname. "I was just cracking up. I don't think I've ever laughed so hard in school. I was getting in trouble from the teachers because I'm cracking up about a girl at a pool party and I totally related to it."

Groove Korea caught up with Krystle on her last night in Korea. "I just decided to try and do something related to Korea because there are so many experiences here that are just, in my opinion, hilarious. The cultural differences, and neither is bad, but it's just funny not being used to it and dealing with it."

The first post was titled "When I go to the jimjilbong and see naked women scrubbing each other," a shocking first experience for most foreigners moving to Korea. "I was walking around and so scared. When I walked in, just everything I saw, my face (just said) oh my gosh, what is this?" she recalled. "But now, I love going to the spas. It's just great, it's just that initial reaction."

Krystle produced this first post, along with a few others, and sent them to a group of select friends on Facebook. Concerned that these friends might think she was slowly losing her mind through the cold winter, she was particularly surprised by what happened next. One of these friends started to pass it on further to others. "I freaked out. I thought, what if people think that I'm crazy?"

Any initial concern that she had following those first few entries in May quickly disappeared. KikinitinKorea spread rapidly

"I look to make sure that things are kind of kept lighthearted, and that it's fun. It's never meant to be offensive."

throughout the social networks amongst current and former expats living in Korea and quickly became one of the most talked-about blogs in the expat community. The blog has now been viewed by over 80,000 unique visitors and is nearing a quarter of a million page views. Most tellingly, 65 percent of all page views come from returning visitors, many of whom check in every few days.

The blog also has thousands of followers on Twitter and Facebook, in spite of the fact that Krystle admits she does still struggle with the technology. "It was really overwhelming. I would post it and then I would see other people, my friends, on Facebook posting it and most people didn't know it was me."

For Krystle, anonymity was important for two reasons. "Obviously there are posts that are maybe a little PG-13," she explained. "Also, I think especially, it wasn't my idea. I basically took this from another blog — and not only that, but so many of the submissions and ideas and the gifs. They're not mine, and so I think it's silly to put my name on something that's not mine. It's kind of a group thing."

What has really made the blog popular seems to be the good-hearted nature of the topics it touches on. "I look to make sure that things are kind of kept lighthearted, and that it's fun. It's never meant to be offensive," Krystle said. "I always wanted to make sure that people knew that it was never meant to be negative. Maybe that's why people like it, because they can laugh, because, hopefully, a lot of these things have happened to them."

Although the future looks strong for the blog, the founder will be stepping back somewhat as she departed from Korea in early October. The blog will now exclusively post user submissions.



Education, with heart

Private girls' school on Jeju espouses creativity, fitness

Story by Groove Korea staff / Photos courtesy Branksome Hall

Number of foreign students: 32

Number of Korean students: 288

Tuition per semester: Contact Seoul Admissions Office,
admissions@branksome.asia

Application deadline: Rolling admission

Information session: Feb. 14, 6:30 p.m. at Seoul Admissions
Office; RSVP to events@branksome.asia

"Yes, we have state-of-the-art facilities and resources that certainly make our school an exceptional environment for learning. However, we believe it is our teachers' passion for education and ability to nurture students, the students and parents themselves and the culture within our school community that truly sets Branksome apart."

— Glen Radojkovich,
Principal of Branksome Hall Asia

■ In Jeju, one of the most innovative educational experiments in the world is playing out to great success. There's a whole town of students mingling, competing, studying and learning together. Indeed, Jeju Global Education City's large cohort of students, teachers and families creates a uniquely small-town cosmopolitan atmosphere. Children have described it as "paradise" and the facilities are world-class. It's essentially a whole city made up of like-minded people.

At its heart is Branksome Hall Asia. Having opened its doors last October in Jeju Global Education City (JGEC) in Seogwipo, it has already established itself as one of the most innovative international schools on the peninsula.

The girls' school has been received enthusiastically. At a hastily put-together information session last winter, 120 families braved the first snowfall of the year and packed into a lecture hall at Ewha Womans University. "It was a very cold Friday. It was the first day of snow that year in Seoul, so we thought it was a good omen," said Peter Kenny, Branksome Hall Asia's director.

Branksome Hall Asia is quite different from other schools. Its campus is more of an Olympic village crossed with an arts center. Classrooms and facilities are state of the art and students are immersed in creative and physical endeavors. "Its goal is to be world-leading," said Kenny. "Thus far I think we have achieved this. Our building designs are iconic, but our service, programs and academics are truly the new world class."

The JGEC is relatively new, so there aren't many shops or activities within the city itself yet. Each weekend the resident team arranges activities from movie outings and beach trips to exploring the environment of Jeju. Branksome Hall Asia even has its own fleet of buses, keeping their drivers very busy.

"In short, all we do is unique," said Kenny. "The facilities, the world-class teachers selected from over 4,000 applications worldwide, the approach to student care and support, the focus on STEM education — science, technology, engineering and maths — for all girls and the amazing performing arts and athletic programs that truly allow all our girls to have a broad but rigorous educational experience."

Kenny said Branksome Hall Asia's people are its biggest strength. "It is the quality of the people in a school that makes a good school great. Our challenge is to live up to our own aspirations and ensure our focus is always on our students in everything we do."

Branksome Hall Asia opened its doors on Oct. 15 with a student body of 320 students. The student body consists of 70 percent Korean nationals who have not lived abroad, 20 percent Korean nationals who have lived abroad, and 10 percent foreign students.

The diversity, the school says, works in its favor. "It certainly does impact on teacher planning and preparations. In fact, the mix of cultures in both the student and teacher population is a fantastic bonus and advantage for the school. Our vision is to create globally minded students so this multicultural mix and awareness is paramount to all we do and value."

From 2013, Branksome Hall Asia offers junior kindergarten (age 3) to grade 11. Within the next 12 months it will offer all grades.

What does Branksome Hall want its graduates to take with them when they graduate? "Simply, to create a better world through their contribution," said Kenny. "Be that large or small, we hope that our graduates are empowered to take positive action and to be models of courage, understanding and a principled life."

"The demands of our educational program are large but this is why the world's best universities recruit our students. They are prepared for higher learning and eager to contribute."

A word from Glen Radojkovich Principal, Branksome Hall Asia

A student's life should be remarkable, and in most cases that begins with a remarkable place, which you'll find at Branksome. Here we focus on our students' own "remarkable"; we nurture their individual talents, allow them to grow to love learning, to love life and to eventually take their place in shaping the world.

Yes, we have state-of-the-art facilities and resources that

certainly make our school an exceptional environment for learning. However, we believe it is our teachers' passion for education and ability to nurture students, the students and parents themselves and the culture within our school community that truly set Branksome apart.

Aristotle once said, "Education of the mind without education of the heart is no education at all." That sits well

with us at Branksome. Here we encourage our students to be principled, knowledgeable, communicators, inquirers, open-minded, caring, risk-takers, balanced and reflective thinkers.

We ask our faculty and students to think differently and we invite your readers to come and find out how.

CAPTURING KOREA

DOWN in DAEJEON

Juxtaposition in Asia's Silicon Valley

Photos by Adam Parsons



Capturing Korea

Capturing Korea is a monthly photography column dedicated to bringing you the sights of Korea. Some scenes will be off the beaten path, settings you won't find in guidebooks or on government tourism websites, while others will be not-so-secret. All will be beautiful in their own way and presented through the eyes of photographers who live in the area. Email mattlamers@groovekorea.com.







THE CENTER OF SOUTH KOREA

Interview by Dylan Goldby

Groove Korea: Tell us a little about Adam Parsons, the man and the photographer.

Adam Parsons: I am originally from California. I have been living in Daejeon for the past nine years and am married with two children.

I had my first photography exhibition showcasing Daejeon in 2007. The same year I organized a photography exhibition at City Hall, the proceeds of which went toward the victims of the Mallipo oil spill (in December). That was also the year I started the Daejeon Photography Club.

I aspire to share the way things appear to me through my photography. Hopefully people get an opportunity to look at the world through my eyes, if only for a second.

You've spent quite a while in Daejeon. Tell us a little about the city.

Daejeon is a great city to live in. I have lived in three of its districts. It is a perfect balance of urban and nature, traditional and modern; it is surrounded by mountains, which is great for nature photography; there is a variety of Buddhist temples scattered throughout the city; every district has a traditional market. Of all of the cities I have visited in Korea, Daejeon is the easiest to navigate.

What are the more photogenic aspects of Daejeon?

The most interesting part of Daejeon that I have seen is the active spirit of the elderly. They are always engaged in an activity.

I like to watch birds along the river — they are there all year. It's interesting to see that the egrets help control the rat population in the city.

There are often times that I stumble upon a festival and had no idea that it was happening.

How might we best explore the city?

Daejeon is a rather small city and it is easy to get around in one day. I usually go to three areas every Saturday. In the mornings and on rainy days, I like to start at Daejeon Station. There is a huge market, Jungang Market, which is a great place to get photos of food, textiles and people.

Gapcheon River runs to Hanbat Arboretum, which is home to a variety of plants and flowers. Between the lotus pond and the rock garden, there is a track for biking and skating. There is a new Botanical Garden in front of the arboretum.

If I want to get away from the city, I catch a bus to a mountain. Mt. Bomun has a zoo and some small temples.

I usually take the 107 bus to Mt. Gyeryong and walk to Donghak-sa. It is a great place to see cherry blossoms in spring and falling leaves in autumn. The entrance is lined with food carts that offer delicious traditional Korean snacks.

My favorite sights year-round at Gyeryong are nature, monks and temples. It is a great place to experience Korea aesthetically.

What is the best time of year to visit?

Jungang Market is interesting all year. However, October is the best time to get a lot of photography in. The weather is perfect. In October there are many outdoor festivals, such as the Free Festival, Flower Festival in Yuseong, and the Hot Air Balloon Festival. In early October there are beautiful flowers around the city, and later in the month there is colorful fall foliage.

What's the best tip you can give to someone heading your way?

Daejeon is very easy to get around. The best tip I can (give someone) heading to Daejeon is to use the bus and subway system. You can take the subway to within walking distance of most places that you would want to get to in the city, such as Hanbat Arboretum and World Cup Stadium. The 102 bus goes through the middle of the city from Daejeon Station to Yuseong Hot Springs, and the 311 goes to the zoo.

"Daejeon is a great city to live in. It is a perfect balance of urban and nature, traditional and modern; it is surrounded by mountains, which is great for nature photography; there is a variety of Buddhist temples scattered throughout the city; and every district has a traditional market." — Adam Parsons

To Daejeon by KTX

Board the KTX express train from Yongsan Station in Seoul. Approx. 20,000 won each way.

To Daejeon by bus

There are three inter-city bus terminals in Daejeon. Approx. 9,000 won each way.

Fostering children for a global world

Sullivan School accepting applications from foreign students

Photos courtesy Sullivan School



Sullivan School facts

- Currently accepting applications from foreign students
- North American-based curriculum
- Bilingual Korean and Western cultural integration
- Pre-school (ages 3-6): Welcoming kids born 2007-2009 for Jan. 2013 enrollment
- Full day: 9 a.m.-4:30 p.m. (Monday-Friday)
- Open since 1993

Contact them

Online: www.sullivanschool.co.kr
Phone: (02) 544-4445
Located in Sinsa-dong, Gangnam-gu, Seoul

“In the modern, global world, we believe it is imperative to accommodate the child’s natural receptivity and capacity for learning.”

— Sullivan School representative

■ The Sullivan School program is based on the Kindergarten Program Curriculum Guidelines of North America. The school day focuses on the integration of children with different backgrounds and experiences to broaden their base of information, form concepts, and acquire foundation skills and positive attitudes.

The school employs experienced teachers from English-speaking countries and from Korea for its kindergarten program with a wide variety of learning expectations.

Scientific studies have shown that children who are raised with more than one language mature into adults who tend to have broader mental capabilities, as well as more tolerant, eclectic attitudes and interests. “In the modern, global world, we believe it is imperative to accommodate the child’s natural receptivity and capacity for learning,” according to the school.

Many parents recognize the value of cross-cultural integration for their children and want their kids to benefit from the enriching experiences of living and learning with children of different backgrounds.

During the kindergarten years, children acquire skills, knowledge and attitudes that will profoundly affect their personal development, their relationships with others, and their future participation in society.

“A child’s success in later life is directly related to the learning and experiences they have in kindergarten,” the school added. 🌐

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- Step 4** Make overseas remittances to your beneficiary at Shinhan Bank ATMs.

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DEAR KOREA

062

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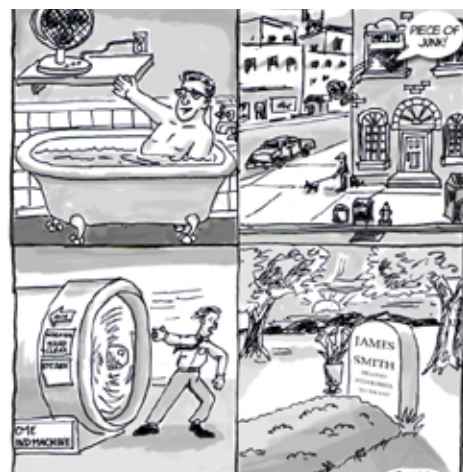


[HTTP://DEARKOREACOMIC.COM](http://dearkoreacomix.com)

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By Lee Scott / See more of his work at: www.thefreemove.com



Games

Crossword , Sudoku

1	2	3	4	5		6	7	8	9		10	11	12	13
14						15					16			
17						18					19			
20						21					22			
				23					24	25				
26	27	28	29				30	31						
32					33	34				35		36	37	38
39				40		41				42				
43						44			45		46			
			47		48				49	50				
51	52	53						54						
55						56	57	58			59	60	61	62
63						64				65				
66						67				68				
69						70				71				

Across

- | | | |
|--|---|----------------------------------|
| 1. It smells | 26. Alien Life Form | 57. Not our |
| 5. Expectorated | 29. Haphazard | 60. Rock from space |
| 9. Second planet from the sun | 33. Lodgers | 63. Moses' brother |
| 14. Goddess of discord (Greek mythology) | 38. Utter monotonously and repetitively | 64. Flair |
| 15. Old stories | 39. Look at flirtatiously | 65. Largest continent |
| 16. Run off to marry | 40. Flying honker | 66. Call |
| 17. Assist | 42. Excretory opening | 67. Richly adorn |
| 18. Monster | 43. Cancel | 68. Apartment payment |
| 19. Part of a joint | 45. Unmelodious | 69. Impudent |
| 20. Paddlewheeler | 47. A church elder | 70. Cards with just one symbol |
| 22. Alter | 48. And so on | 71. Products of human creativity |
| 23. Cubic meter | 49. An English dynasty | |
| 24. Seacoast | 52. Severe | |

Down

- | | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. Approaches | 28. To and ____ | 55. An unbroken period of time |
| 2. Path around the sun | 30. Completed | 56. Warms |
| 3. Strainer | 31. Burden | 57. Faucets |
| 4. Aromatic compound | 32. Untidiness | 58. Laugh |
| 5. Slovenly person | 33. 007 | 59. Greek god of love |
| 6. Jump up and down | 34. Arch type | 61. Story |
| 7. Wall hanging | 35. Seaweed | 62. Concludes |
| 8. What we chew with | 36. Responses | |
| 9. Former military man | 37. Boozer | |
| 10. Primary | 41. Take to court | |
| 11. Not a single one | 44. Tournament | |
| 12. Once ____ a time | 46. Reflected sound | |
| 13. Transmit | 50. Greek last letter | |
| 21. Absorb written material | 51. Museum piece | |
| 25. Acquaint | 53. Palm cockatoo | |
| 27. Fable | 54. Stair part | |

3				5	1	4	
				1			2
		5				7	
	9			8	7		6 4
	2	4				1	
		1		6			
1	4		6			3	
8			7	9			
	3			8			

4		8		2		7	
9		7		3			
				8	1		9
8	3	5				4	7
					5		1
				9		6	
2		4		5			
						8	4
6						3	

How to play

Sudoku requires no calculation or arithmetic skills. It is essentially a game of placing numbers in squares, using very simple rules of logic and deduction.

Objective

The objective of the game is to fill all the blank squares in a game with the correct numbers. There are three very simple constraints to follow. In a 9 by 9 square Sudoku game:

- Every row of 9 numbers must include all digits 1 through 9 in any order.
- Every column of 9 numbers must include all digits 1 through 9 in any order.
- Every 3 by 3 subsection of the 9 by 9 square must include all digits 1 through 9.

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Horoscopes

December 2012



Aries / March 20 - April 20

Winter has given you the urge to clean house when it comes to work. However, don't let your temper get the best of you this month. Remain calm and think about what's best for your future before making any rash decisions. Seek advice from a close friend or relative if you're not sure what to do.



Libra / September 24 - October 23

Your ability to be a good listener will be needed this month as a close friend goes through a rough time. Your pleasant nature will help get him or her back on track. Don't let a quarrel with your special someone get you down. Your good nature will bring him or her around.



Taurus / April 21 - May 21

Don't go against your nature this month. A loved one helps you realize what you want when it comes to your personal life. So, go out and get it. Don't let others stand in your way. However, when it comes to work, it's best to hold back your opinions until you know the whole story.



Scorpio / October 24 - November 22

Your determination puts you in line for top honors in the workplace. The higher-ups finally recognize all the time and effort you put in. Don't be shy when it comes to romance this month. Even though it's against your nature, let your feelings be known. They'll be reciprocated.



Gemini / May 22 - June 21

Your ability to think fast on your feet will come in handy during a social outing this month. Don't let a surprise throw you off guard. Work will keep you busy during the beginning of the month, so you must focus on the task at hand. Your efforts won't go unnoticed. A bonus is on the way.



Sagittarius / November 23 - December 21

Your happy, gregarious nature will be challenged this month as loved ones share a family secret. The news may come as a surprise but don't let your temper flare. Take it in stride. Your optimism pays off when it comes to romance. That special someone finally will make a move.



Cancer / June 22 - July 22

A family situation will put you to the test this month. Don't let your emotions get the best of you. Stay strong and use your sense of humor to keep loved ones calm. You'll be riding high when it comes to romance. An evening with a good friend will turn out to be much more.



Capricorn / December 22 - January 19

Now is your chance to get ahead at work. Your boss offers you the opportunity to take a commanding role in the company and you're up to the challenge. Don't let your stubborn side take control when it comes to friends. You'll have a good time, even though you didn't make the plans.



Leo / July 23 - August 23

Your pride may get you into trouble with a co-worker this month. Don't make the situation worse by trying to take control. In your personal life, romantic efforts finally will pay off — that special someone will show you that he or she really cares. Don't rush in too fast. Take your time.



Aquarius / January 20 - February 18

Your sense of realism does well for you in all areas of your life this month. You won't overreact to a surprise at work, making you a pillar of strength for your co-workers. As for your love life, it's time to take the next step in a relationship. Think about it.



Virgo / August 24 - September 23

You'll have to fight your fear of crowds this month as a meeting at work puts you in the spotlight. Your organization and perfectionism will pull you through with flying colors — and a lot of praise. Don't be too hard on yourself after a fight with a loved one.



Pisces / February 19 - March 19

Don't let feelings of self-doubt keep you from reaching a new level of success. Believe in yourself and you can accomplish anything. A realistic look at finances will help you plan for the future. Pay attention to details at work, especially if you deal with numbers. Diet plays a role.

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Lotte Hotel Busan

Ladies Special packages

Since its launch in 2010, the Ladies Special has been a favorite among women planning private parties.

The Happy Birthday Lady package includes a Corner Suite room and welcoming gifts consisting of fruit, chocolates, five Lotte Cinema movie tickets, LUSH shower ball sets, vouchers for Karaoke, seafood salad and pizza. Get all this and more for 390,000 won (tax and service charges excluded). This package goes for 510,000 won (tax and service charges excluded).

For inquiries and reservation, contact 051-810-1100



Novotel Ambassador Busan

24-hour package

Novotel Ambassador Busan offers the unprecedented 24 Package. In a break from the usual 2 p.m. check in and noon check out — this package lets you stay in the hotel for a full 24 hours. This is in consideration of customers who want to follow a more leisurely schedule.

It is available from Jan. 1 to March 31 (Sunday-Wednesday). The price is 240,000 won (including service charge and tax) for an ocean view room.

For inquiries and reservation, contact 051-743-1234



Grand Hilton Seoul

Winter escape package

For those in search of a relaxing winter escape in the midst of the city, the Grand Hilton Seoul is offering a selection of winter packages until February.

Package I offers a one-night stay in a Deluxe Room, a coupon to enjoy coffee for two at the Atrium Café and a copy of the lifestyle magazine Maison. Package II features an overnight stay in a Superior room as well as the benefits of Package I. Both packages include complimentary use of the swimming pool and gym. Price start at 179,999 won and go up to 339,000 won (tax and service charges excluded).

For inquiries and reservation, contact: (02) 2287-8400



Sheraton Grande Walkerhill

Sparkling Moments package

Sheraton Grande Walkerhill is offering the Sparkling Moments Package until Feb. 17.

It consists of one night in a 5-star hotel room, breakfast, VIP tickets to "Sparkling Secrets," the Swarovski's exhibition, and an art book. The price starts at 184,000 won and goes up to 358,000 won (tax and service charges excluded). Four guests will be selected to participate in the Art Package, which includes a lecture on styling given by renowned stylists, Swarovski performance and exhibition entrance.

For inquiries and reservation, contact: (02) 2022-0000



JW Marriot Hotel

New Year for lovers

JW Marriott Hotel Seoul presents a special one-day package to celebrate the New Year. The In-Room Fun package includes one night in a Superior room, a bottle of wine, a cake delivered to the room, and a complimentary set of limited edition Calvin Klein couple trunks. The package also offers complimentary use of JW Marriott Seoul's fitness center (the largest in Asia) and swimming pool. The In-Room Fun package is priced at 369,000 won (plus tax and service charge).

For inquiries and reservation, contact: (02) 6282.6282



Novotel Ambassador Gangnam

French Holiday

Novotel Ambassador Gangnam offers the winter package French Holiday. French Holiday package I includes a night in a Standard room and 50 percent off the hotel's sauna. French Holiday package II comes with two breakfast vouchers for the buffet restaurant The Square, saunas, and free internet in a Superior room. The package starts at 169,000 won (tax and service charges excluded). The hotel is preparing book vouchers, premium perfumes and 2013 diaries for the first 100 guests finding almond feve in Galette pie.

For inquiries and reservation, contact: (02) 567-1101





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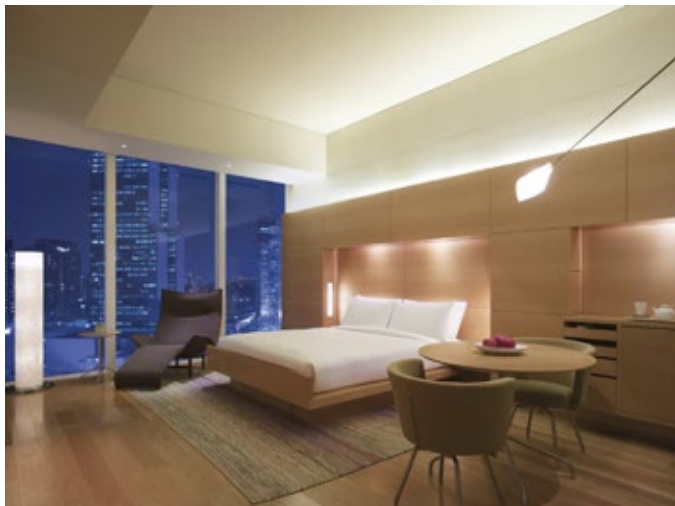
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Park Hyatt Hotel

Winter at the park

Park Hyatt's luxurious winter package comes with a Yido white ceramic tea cup set for two for guests staying in a regular room, and a CH Carolina Herrera silk scarf for guests staying in a suite room. In-room internet service and a special breakfast discount at Cornerstone are also included in the package. In addition, guests can enjoy breakfast at Cornerstone at a specially discounted price of 30,000 won. The price for the Regular room package starts from 365,000 won and the Suite room package starts from 510,000 won.

For inquiries and reservation, contact: (02) 2016-1100; Guest Services



Club Med Korea

Feb-Kabira beach special package

Club Med, Premium All Inclusive resort, promotes "Special Package" for fixed date departure for Kabira beach in Okinawa, Japan in February. Club Med Kabira Beach is located on Ishigaki island which is famous for spectacular ocean view and the Okinawa cuisine including Ishigaki beef. Kabira beach is also the best destination of marine sports including snorkeling, scuba diving*, windsurfing, and kite surfing. The special package is starting from 1,190,000 won and booking online gives a 2% extra discount, which offers dreamlike holiday at a better price. For more information and reservations, contact 02-3452-0123.



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2012. 12. 17

서대문종합사회복지관 1층 실버 카페테리아



Starbucks steps up social contributions

Company says it's committed to supporting welfare of single mothers

➤ The renovation of Café Eastern in Namgaja-dong, Seoul, was recently completed, Starbucks Korea and its partner companies announced.

Café Eastern was opened in 2008 as an independent café to support the elderly. It is subsidized by the Ministry of Health and Welfare. Starbucks Korea has been supporting the café since 2008 and embarked upon renovations of its interior and staff retraining.

"This project is a good sample of how we

can donate our talent," said a spokesperson. "Since 2005, Starbucks Korea has donated more than 6,500 hours to special programs such as babysitting services for single mothers and barista training programs for single mothers."

The renovation completion ceremony was attended by authorities from Starbucks Korea and hundreds of concerned parties. During the ceremony, six silver baristas currently on duty at Café Eastern gave Starbucks Ko-

rea and its partners a letter of appreciation.

"We are grateful to our partners and proud of our accomplishment for the last five years. And we hope this project contributes to the sustainability of the welfare for the elderly," said Lee Seok-gu, CEO of Starbucks Korea.

Starbucks said it is committed to supporting the operations of the café and the welfare of single mothers and the handicapped.





International clubs in Seoul

To add your club to this list, e-mail mattlamers@groovekorea.com. — Ed.

Royal Asiatic Society

raskb@koreanet.net / www.raskb.com

This non-profit organization offers lectures about Korea's history and culture, while also arranging tours to locations throughout the country.

The Australia and New Zealand Association

events@anzakorea.com / www.anzakorea.com

Catch up with them at the Grand Hyatt Paris Bar from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. on March 20. Members are charged 12,000 won. Non-members pay 17,000 won.

The British Association of Seoul

basseoul@yahoo.co.uk / www.britishseoul.com

BASS is a vibrant and active social group for British expatriates and all nationalities. We seek to enhance our members' experience in Seoul, and provide hope and financial assistance to Korean charities in need.

Seoul International Women's Association

president@siwapage.com / www.siwapage.com

SIWA is open to women of all nationalities. Its monthly Coffee Mornings are held the 3rd Wednesday of the month. Among its many other activities are twice-yearly classes for members by members referred to as Interest Groups.

Busan International Women's Association

biwadove@yahoo.co.uk / www.biwakorea.com

This association extends friendship and support to international women living in the Busan-Kyungsang-Namdo area. The group meets at Starbucks opposite the Busan Aquarium on the 4th Wednesday of the month. Members and non-members are welcome.

Seoul Writers Workshop

seoulwriters@gmail.com / seoulwriters.wordpress.com

SWW members meet every two weeks in order to read and critique each other's work. The aim is to provide opinions and constructive criticism. Work is distributed before workshops.

Helping Others Prosper through English

bedavinci@naver.com / www.alwayshope.or.kr

HOPE's goals are to empower children through education and to open doors of opportunity for tomorrow's leaders. HOPE is one of the largest volunteer-based foreigner organizations in Korea and is comprised of both foreign and Korean staff.

KOTESOL

www.kotesol.org

Korea Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages is a professional organization for teachers of English. Our main goals are to assist members in their self-development, and improve ELT in Korea.

Overseas Chinese Women's Club

<http://ocwckr.wordpress.com>

This club meets monthly and is open to anyone interested in learning about Chinese culture and making new friends. Conversation is in Mandarin.



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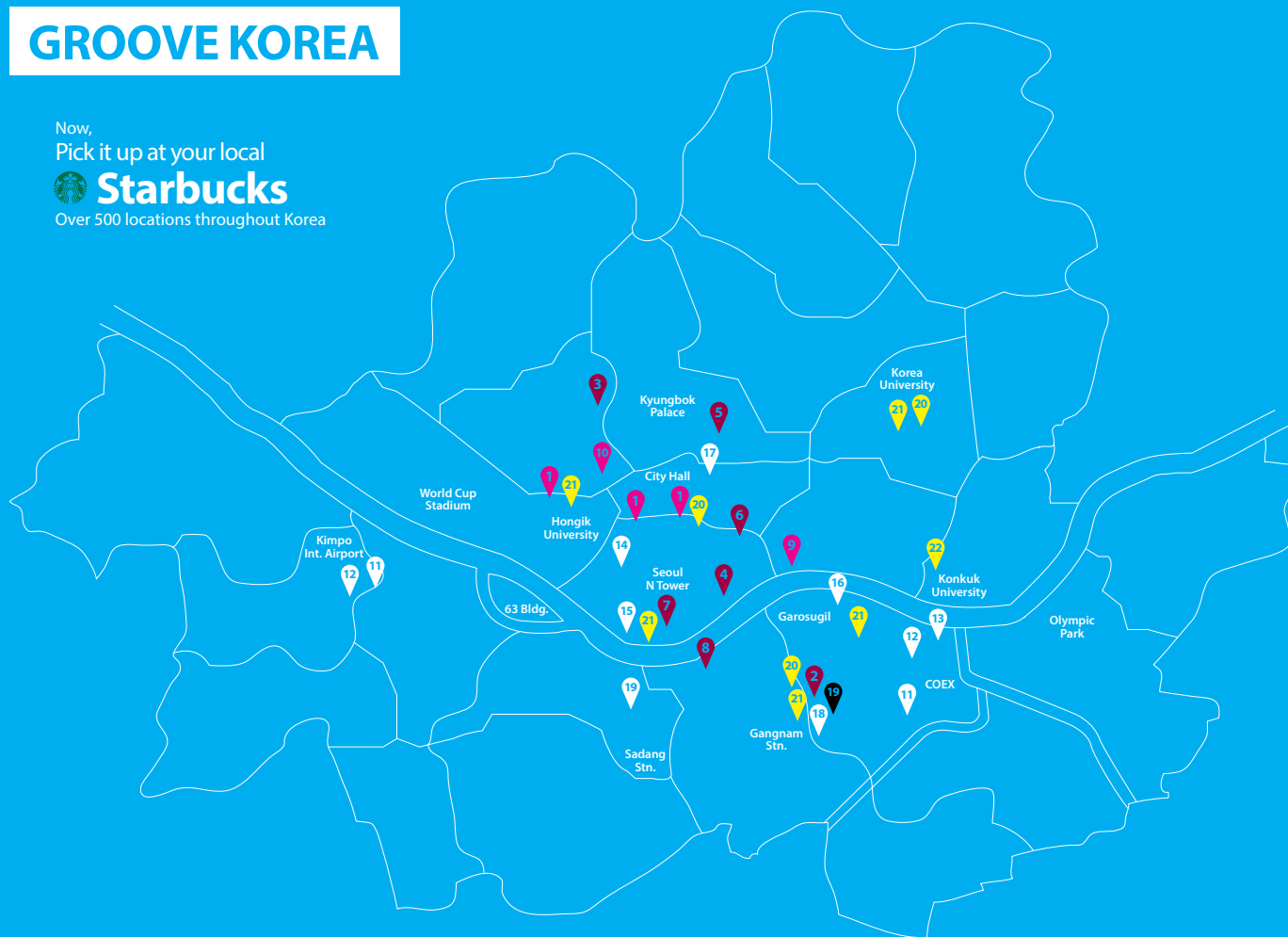
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Korea's leading skin care and hair loss specialists
02-563-7977</p> |
| <p>2 NOVOTEL AMBASSADOR
Gangnam area</p> | <p>8 JW MARRIOTT
Gangnam area</p> | <p>14 ESARANG DENTAL
Internationally trained staff and state of the art techniques
02-701-2199</p> | <p>19 BIG ROCK
Premium craft beers from Alberta Canada
02-539-6650</p> |
| <p>3 GRAND HILTON SEOUL
Shinchon area</p> | <p>9 LANCE&J PT/FITNESS
Professional and customized fitness programs and squash
02-796-6560</p> | <p>15 UPENNIVY DENTAL
TRICARE member. English speaking dentist.
02-797-7784</p> | <p>20 CPK (California Pizza Kitchen)
The legendary pizza from Beverly Hills California
02-3479-9000</p> |
| <p>4 IP BOUTIQUE HOTEL
Itaewon area</p> | <p>10 LUCY HAIR
Hair consultant trained in UK
02-325-2225</p> | <p>16 SMART DENTAL
Smart dental promise gentle, comfort, precise, and clean dentistry
02-517-6278</p> | <p>21 DOSTACOS
Simply the best Mexican restaurant in Korea
02-593-5904</p> |
| <p>5 SOMERSET PALACE
Kyungbok palace area</p> | <p>11 MIZMEDI HOSPITAL
World class health care for women</p> | <p>17 YEIN DENTAL
One-stop dental care with the best location at the City Hall.
02-756-2828</p> | <p>22 CAFE 4B/MONOMO
International café and Japanese Ramen restaurant</p> |
| <p>6 ASTORIA HOTEL
Myungdong area</p> | <p>12 WOORIDUL HOSPITAL
World top quality center for neuro-musculoskeletal diseases</p> | | |

SEOUL

Itaewon

- ☪ 3 Alley Pub
- ☪ All American Diner
- ☪ Amigo
- ☪ Bar Bliss
- ☪ BBB Korea
- ☪ Berlin
- ☪ Bistro Praha
- ☪ Brick
- ☪ Bungalow
- ☪ CasAntonio
- ☪ Cold Stone Creamery
- ☪ Copacabana
- ☪ Cup & Bowl
- ☪ Don Valley
- ☪ Flying Pan
- ☪ Gecko's Garden
- ☪ Gecko's Terrace
- ☪ Gobble n' Go
- ☪ Healing Hands
- ☪ Hollywood Grill
- ☪ Hillside
- ☪ Holy Chow
- ☪ International Clinic
- ☪ Itaewon Global Center Village
- ☪ La Bocca
- ☪ La Cigale Montmartre
- ☪ Loco Loca
- ☪ Meili's Deli
- ☪ Moghul
- ☪ My Thai
- ☪ Nashville
- ☪ Neal's Yard
- ☪ Old Stompers
- ☪ Pattaya
- ☪ Quiznos
- ☪ Rocky Mountain Tavern
- ☪ Santorini
- ☪ Seoul Club
- ☪ Skywellness Chiropractic
- ☪ Smokey Saloon
- ☪ Solution
- ☪ Sortino's
- ☪ Taco Amigo
- ☪ Tony's Aussie Bar
- ☪ What The Book
- ☪ Wolfhound
- ☪ Zelen

HBC, Kyungridan & Yongsan-gu

- ☪ Buddha's Belly
- ☪ Chakraa
- ☪ Chili Chili Tacos
- ☪ Craftworks
- ☪ Green Banana
- ☪ HBC Gogitjib
- ☪ Hillside Pub
- ☪ Hwang Mi Seo foot care
- ☪ Istanbul
- ☪ Itaewon Animal Hospital
- ☪ Jacoby's
- ☪ Jamba Juice
- ☪ Latte King
- ☪ Lazy Sue
- ☪ Le Vert
- ☪ Naked Grill
- ☪ Phillies
- ☪ Phillies Steak
- ☪ Res2Go
- ☪ Standing Coffee

- ☪ TG Brunch
- ☪ Thunder Burger
- ☪ Yongsan Recycle Center
- ☪ Yoons' Oriental Clinic
- ☪ Café JeJe
- ☪ Dojo
- ☪ Noxa Lounge

Gangnam, Sinsa & Chungdam areas

- ☪ AOC
- ☪ Baram plastic surgery
- ☪ Big Rock
- ☪ California Pizza Kitchen
- ☪ CK Chiropractic
- ☪ Dos Tacos
- ☪ Dublin Irish Pub
- ☪ Dunhill
- ☪ Hushu dental & skin clinic
- ☪ Jaseng Oriental Hospital
- ☪ Nova Skin Clinic
- ☪ Once in a blue moon
- ☪ Smart Dental Clinic
- ☪ TengTeng Skin Clinic
- ☪ Yonsei Mi Dental Clinic

Konkuk University

- ☪ Café 4B
- ☪ Monomo

Hongdae & Sinchon

- ☪ aA museum café
- ☪ Agio
- ☪ Beer O'clock
- ☪ Castle Praha
- ☪ Dos Tacos
- ☪ Hair & Joy
- ☪ Mike's Cabin
- ☪ On The Border
- ☪ Tin Pan
- ☪ Yonsei Mi Dental Clinic
- ☪ Zen Art Center

BUNDANG & YONGIN

- ☪ Underground
- ☪ Batman bar
- ☪ Travelers

BUSAN

- ☪ Basement
- ☪ Breeze Bum's
- ☪ Fuzzy Navel (Haeundae)
- ☪ Kino Eye (Daeyeon-dong)
- ☪ Mojo (Jangjeon-dong)
- ☪ Rock N Roll (Bujeon-dong)
- ☪ Taco Family (Jangjeon-dong)
- ☪ The SKOOL (Woo-dong)
- ☪ Wolfhound (Haeundae)

DAEGU

- ☪
- ☪
- ☪
- ☪

INCHEON

- ☪ Fog City International Cafe

DAEJEON

- ☪ Cantina

ILSAN

- ☪ Big Bread
- ☪ Yonsei Joshua Clinic

JEONJU

- ☪ Jeonju English Center

JEJU

- ☪ Zapata's (Jeju city)
- ☪ Jeju tourism offices

CHUNGJU

- ☪ Road King

FRANCHISES

- ☪ Starbucks
- ☪ Dos Tacos
- ☪ Jamba Juice
- ☪ California Pizza Kitchen
- ☪ HBC Gogitjib
- ☪ Breeze Bum's
- ☪ Wolfhound
- ☪ Cold Stone Creamery
- ☪ Quiznos

GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

- ☪ Incheon International Air Ports
- ☪ Kimpo Airports
- ☪ Korea Tourism Organization
- ☪ Seoul City Hall
- ☪ Daegu City Hall
- ☪ Gangnam-gu Tourism Office
- ☪ Seoul Global Center
- ☪ TBS eFM station

HOTELS

- ☪ Lotte Hotel Seoul
- ☪ Lotte Hotel Busan
- ☪ Grand Hilton
- ☪ Novotel Ambassador Gangnam
- ☪ Westin Chosun Hotel
- ☪ Grand Hyatt Hotel Seoul
- ☪ Somerset Palace Seoul
- ☪ JW Marriott Hotel Seoul
- ☪ Astoria Hotel (Myung-dong)
- ☪ Hamilton Hotel
- ☪ Novotel Ambassador Busan
- ☪ The Ritz-Carlton Seoul
- ☪ Millennium Hilton
- ☪ Oakwood Premier Coex Center
- ☪ Han Suites Serviced Residences
- ☪ Hyatt Regency Incheon
- ☪ The MVL (Yeosu)
- ☪ Hotel Inter-Bulgo (Daegu)
- ☪ Sea Cloud Hotel Busan
- ☪ InterContinental Alpensia Resort (Fyeongchang)

HOSPITALS & HEALTH CLINICS

- ☪ Lee Moon Won Oriental Clinic (Chungdam-dong)
- ☪ Seoul National Univ. Gangnam Health Center (Yeoksam-dong)
- ☪ Gangnam Severance Hospital (Dogok-dong)
- ☪ Wooidul Spine Hospital (Chungdam-dong)
- ☪ MizMedi Women's Hospital (Daechi-dong)
- ☪ Samsung Medical Center (Ilwon-dong)
- ☪ NOVA Skin Clinic (Gangnam stn)
- ☪ Oracle Skin Clinic (Gangnam stn)
- ☪ UPennlv Dental Clinic (Ichon-dong)
- ☪ ESARANG Dental Clinic (Gongduk-dong)
- ☪ Yein Dental Clinic (City Hall)
- ☪ A Plus Dental (Shinsa-dong)
- ☪ TUFT Denatal (Samsung-dong)
- ☪ TengTeng Skin Clinic (Shinsa-dong)
- ☪ CK Chiropractic (Nonhyeon-dong)
- ☪ Yonsei Mi Dental Clinic (Hongdae & Shinsa-dong)
- ☪ Healing Hands (Itaewon)

US ARMY BASES

- ☪ Yongsan Garrison
- ☪ Pyeongtaek Camp Humphreys
- ☪ Osan AB
- ☪ Chinhae Naval Base
- ☪ Daegu Camp Walker

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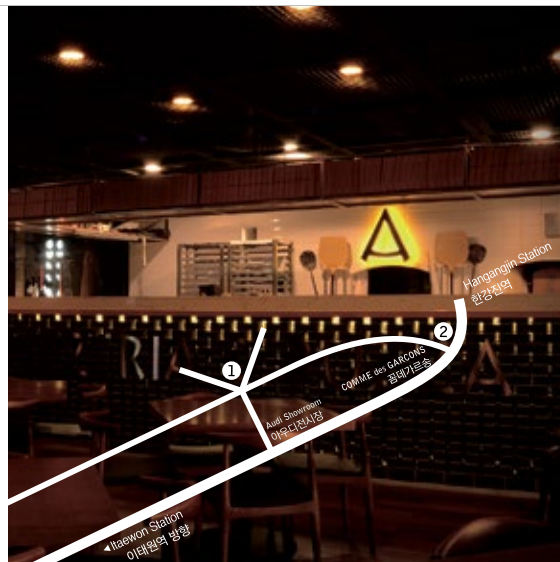


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Brunch Menu

Penne Bread Pasta • Butter Sugar Toast • Cajun Chicken Sandwich

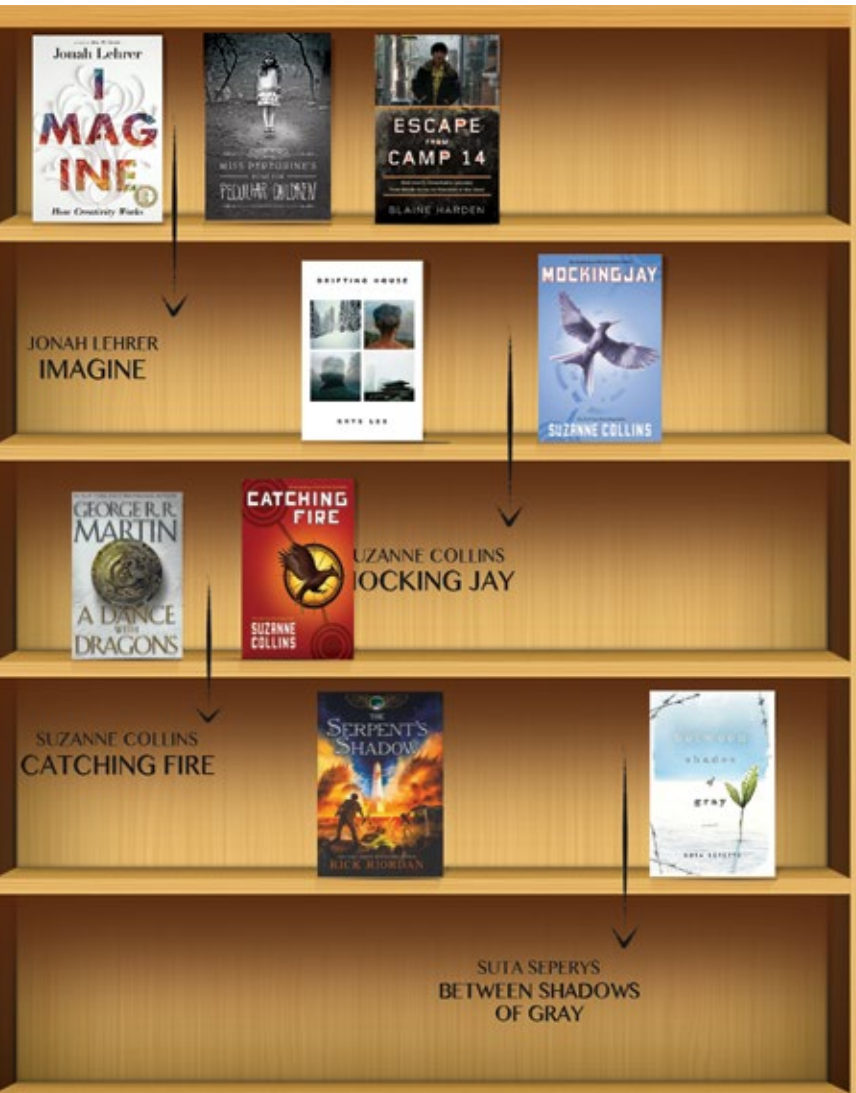
Dunch Menu

Teriyaki Chicken • John Bacon Burger • Brunch Wrap • Burger Steak • Sirloin Steak

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